

University of Alberta

**A Student In My Own Classroom: A Study of Shifting Authority
in Teacher Education**

by

Jo Ann Gainor La Pierre



A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

Department of Elementary Education

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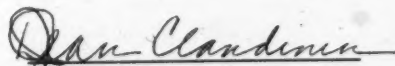
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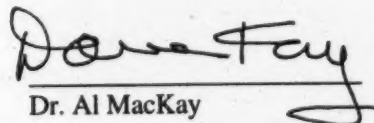
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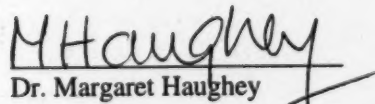
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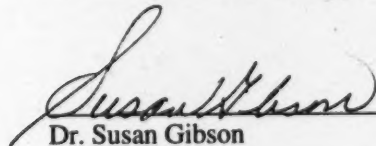
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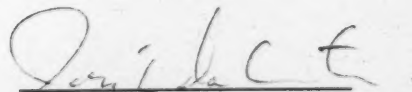
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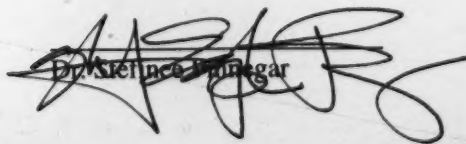

Dr. Jean Clandinin


Dr. Al MacKay


Dr. Margaret Haughey


Dr. Susan Gibson


Dr. Jose da Costa


Dr. Stefanie Mangar

July 22, 1998

Abstract

This narrative self-study explores my place as teacher in the classroom, as it shifted with my understanding of how I could best prepare future teachers to work with children. I began with an exploration of the use of case-based instruction to help students translate child development theory into practice. This slowly evolved into an emphasis on how personal stories of experience embody the child development principles that influence how we interact with children. The more students told their stories, the stronger their "voice" became in my classroom. The less talking I did as the teacher, the more I paid attention to how my students were learning. Our understanding of how children grow and develop began to be co-constructed in the classroom and the learning became more collaborative.

The first theme or "thread," then, to emerge from this four year study was how my use of case-based instruction evolved into an emphasis on personal stories of experience, how they embody personal knowledge, and how telling these stories helped develop reflective professional practice. As I struggled with how best to facilitate this process, my authority as the expert in the classroom began to shift. Examining this shifting authority became the second thread of this study. Slowly my perspective on myself as teacher also began to shift as I allowed more space for student voice in my classroom. Exploring this shifting relationship with students became the third thread of this study.

The field texts for this narrative self-study were derived from an on-going record of my practices and my reflection on those practices as contained in my research journal and in excerpts from students' work, closely examined videotapes of myself teaching, and formal and informal student evaluations.

The understandings that I reached from this work-in-progress are represented in the conclusion through a series of "reflective turns." I link teaching and learning in these reflective turns, as I address my own teaching as a model for my students' teaching and my own learning experiences as a model for the experiences of my students. An awareness of the link between our personal and professional lives and how that connection is an integral part of our teaching became the third reflective turn of this study. Cultivating the habit of reflection on my own teaching and finding ways to encourage my students to develop the reflection so critical to professional growth became the fourth turn.

The other turns reflect on my shift from being the expert in the classroom to becoming a curious learner, how important it is to remain aware of the "hidden curriculum" my teaching models, and a growing understanding of how I am shaped by my students as our teaching stories are shaped by our family stories.

Becoming a teacher-researcher was the impetus I needed to move from knowing to doing on my journey to becoming a better teacher and a better model of teaching for my students. I am hopeful that the process of growth described in this study and my reflections on that growth will be a

helpful addition to the growing body of research for teacher educators on
how to more effectively prepare professionals to work with children.

Dedication

To Jean - a wonder-full model of teaching and the midwife
of this life-work

To Michou & Andre - my dearly loved best teachers

To Mom & Helen - whose stories of teaching bent the twig

To my students - who held the flashlight while I cautiously picked
my way

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1	Introduction	1
Chapter 2	How This Study Was Done	11
Chapter 3	Thread #1: Shifting View of the Use of Cases and How People Learn	27
Chapter 4	Thread #2: Shifting Authority in My Classroom	57
Chapter 5	Thread #3: With Students - Shifting Relationships	112
Chapter 6	Reflective Turns: Conclusions in a Work-In-Progress	141
Bibliography		150
Appendix 1	Ethical Implications of This Study	155

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The research journey begins

In 1994, I took a summer institute course at the University of Alberta with Dr. Jean Clandinin, little realizing this was to be the first step of my journey into researching my own teaching practices. This was a puzzlingly different kind of course. While the course was on curriculum studies, Jean's emphasis on the use of personal story to reflect on practice was new to me. I began to discover, as I engaged in the process, the power of telling my own stories of teaching to help me reflect on my twenty-some years of practice. As I reflected on the children I remembered from all those years of past teaching, and talked to fellow students about them, and wrote and rewrote my experiences, I began to appreciate some of my real strengths as a teacher and some of those arenas where I could have done things differently and responded in ways more helpful to the children I worked with. Through journalling, I thought more deeply about the meaning of curriculum in my teaching and what it was I valued most in my work.

Clandinin and Connelly (1995) refer to this storying of teaching experiences in their descriptions of the "professional knowledge landscape." As I explored this landscape in Jean's courses, talking, writing and thinking about the high school students, the grade one children, the adult learners I had taught, I had my first inkling that what was most important to me in those memories was not how much I taught them about English or beginning math and reading, but rather how encouraging I had been to them as they struggled to make sense of their schoolwork, to make sense of their lives. I began to better understand what teaching really meant to me. Since this "restorying" was so powerful for me and the other teachers I talked to, I wanted my own students to have this same experience. Trying to figure out how to translate my own learning experiences into learning experiences for my students, trying to help them think about teaching and its importance in their lives, brought me to my beginning steps as a teacher-researcher.

Context for this study

It was reassuring to find, in the literature on the preparation of teachers, calls for research to be done by teacher-researchers studying their developing practices.

Considerable research has been done on the process of teacher development, but most of it has centered on beginning classroom teachers and has been conducted by researchers outside the classroom. The research on the development of teacher educators has been much more limited and, until recently, that too has been investigated by researchers who were not necessarily teacher educators. Consequently, most of our knowledge about developing as teachers and teaching teachers has not been grounded in practice or personal experience. (Hamilton and Pinnegar, 1998, p. 236)

There are also frequent references to how much we teach the way we were taught and how we might help students examine this previous experience that has such an influence on what we do when we become the teachers. The many hours spent observing our own teachers and parents have already strongly influenced what we think about schools and teaching long before we become teachers ourselves. Most beginning teachers, according to Richert (1992), "have more than sixteen thousand hours of classroom experience before they enter their formal professional preparation. They arrive with clear images of what schools are like and what teachers do" (p. 191).

Lortie (1975) describes the socialization of teachers as occurring through observation of their own teachers during the thousands of hours they spend as students in close contact with them. Once these students become teachers, this "embedded knowledge" (Clandinin and Connelly, 1995) becomes a major influence, shaping the new teacher's conception of the teaching role. In the "sink or swim" experience of novice teachers, beginning teachers revert to what is most familiar and shift from "received knowing to the subjectivist perspective" (McAninch, 1993, p. 37). In this study, I take a closer look at how examining my own personal stories of school and family interactions led to my attempts to recreate this experience for my students and how this journey, made by the students and me together, altered who I was in the classroom.

As I began to research my own teaching, I attempted to become someone who could more effectively prepare my community college students to work with children. There is much debate on how best to prepare future teachers. Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981)

point out the need for more research on the impact of university courses by saying, "...there has been very little direct analysis of the role that the form and content of university teacher education plays in shaping the professional perspectives of students" (p. 10). This viewpoint is supported by Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1985), who say that cognitive psychology research and teacher education research show that novice teachers have problems transferring learning to practice. How knowledge is transferred to practice is of particular concern and the word "reflection" often surfaces. Ciriello, Valli and Taylor (1992) describe novice teachers, lacking in professional knowledge, as needing to base their practices on childhood memories of teachers, or on imitations of their cooperating teachers' practices, or on closely followed curriculum guides. Students need to be aware that knowledge is not directly transferable, "but that it takes reflection on specific circumstances to discern whether and which experiences or principles apply" (p. 102).

According to Goodlad (1991), this kind of reflection is not typical of most teacher education courses:

We found very little intellectual wave-making in the programs we studied. The very listening, responding to questions, and participating in teacher-directed discussions that go on in schools, according to much research, characterized almost all of most teacher education programs.... teachers teach as they observed and experienced teaching in schools, colleges, and universities during sixteen or seventeen years of attendance. They don't think in terms of knowledge informing action, but rather as an accumulation of techniques. The rush to cram in information appeared to abort the emergence of sustained inquiry and reflection." (p. 265)

I began my university studies with an interest in case-based instruction as a way to encourage reflection; it seemed to be effective in other professional disciplines like law, business and medicine. I had been experimenting with using cases in my college courses in child development and I began to see that the cases I presented in class inevitably drew out personal stories and the two, with a slender thread of theory, seemed to intertwine and strengthen each other. As a student myself, in graduate studies, I was able to take the time to look at what was really happening in my classrooms - the ones where I was the student - the ones where I was the teacher - the ones where my students were the teachers. The nestedness of my teaching became clearer and a context for my interest in cases and for my study began to emerge.

Donald Schon's work (1983, 1987, 1991) on reflective practice was reverberating throughout the educational world and helped me to think about how my use of case studies in the classroom might encourage the reflection a professional needs to develop in order to handle the complex world of working with children. Analyzing real-life situations faced by professionals and parents, and making connections to child development principles seemed to be an effective strategy to help students become aware of theory as it is embedded in practice. Writers like Cruikshank and Metcalf (1990) discussed the use of vehicles such as journals, observation, interaction analysis, and problem-based simulations to encourage reflection and suggested that how we encourage students to become thoughtful teachers needs more study: "Because the generic notion of reflective teaching is quite new, or at the least newly revisited, reports of training endeavors are scant," especially when it comes to "reflection resulting in higher order thinking about teaching" (p. 486).

My professional reading at that time found many references to the need to nurture the ability to reflect in the education of teachers. Lee Schulman (1987) was one typical example describing reflection as "what a teacher does when he or she looks back at the teaching and learning that has occurred, and reconstructs, reenacts, and/or recaptures the events, the emotions, and the accomplishments. It is that set of processes through which a professional learns from experience" (p. 18). This reflection deepens, as Margaret Haughey (1996, personal communication) put it, when we re-enter a moment of teaching, cope with the emotions as well as the problem presented, and learn about ourselves in relationship to others. As I shared my own stories of practice and noticed how one story often engendered another and how the experience was making me thoughtful about my teaching, I felt a growing understanding of what I was asking my own students to do.

As I continued to use case-based instruction, I noticed how much videocases drew out personal stories, even those that were emotionally very difficult for some students to share. This echoed my experiences in the 1994 summer institute with Jean when the telling of my own stories of practice helped me to see aspects of my teaching that I had not noticed before. Elizabeth Jones (1984) expressed it well when she said that this approach provides "not only a firm base of 'theory in their bones' but also the ability to articulate it, to think analytically about what they do intuitively" (p. 201).

I was curious to see if my use of cases, intertwined with personal stories of experience, might be one way to help students tease out the implicit theory driving their practices with children, in order to strengthen their convictions about good practice, have new knowledge inform their actions, and change those recognized as ineffective or harmful. Selma Wasserman (1992) is one who strongly advocates the use of cases in teacher education:

Teachers cannot give students conceptual understanding; students have to engage, actively and reflectively, in experiences from which concepts are drawn. Teachers cannot give students the ability to function independently and intelligently. They can, however, create the conditions in which such abilities can grow and flourish (pp. 798-99).

Goodlad (1991) supports the need for cases as he reflects on his own classes with teachers:

[After doing a course with teachers preparing to be principals] I am convinced that the necessary educating cannot be accomplished in lecture-type courses and with the conventional reading list. These graduate students and I agreed that carefully prepared case studies were necessary, augmented by field observations and by short, student-prepared cases derived from their teaching internships--all accompanied by intensive discussion and relevant reading (pp. 293-94).

A good deal of research is available on the various approaches to case-based instruction currently being developed by educators. These range from fictitious mini-situations with prepared discussion questions to true life accounts presented in great detail and complexity, to videocases, to cases written by students themselves. Many issues arise, as described by Merseth (1991), including whether cases constitute the complete curriculum, whether true accounts or reconstructions are more suitable, and how a case is constructed in a way that will facilitate connections between theory and practice.

Judith Shulman (1992) has written extensively about the use of cases in teacher education and the need for them to be authentically written by teachers themselves. She is committed to "bringing the practitioner's own voice to the literature on teaching" as "practitioners like reading cases by other practitioners. They can identify with them because the accounts ring true, unlike many of those written by researchers." She does not view cases as just anecdotes because cases "provide the contextual and historical elements that readers need to put themselves into the situation with a tolerable measure

of its complexity. They reveal some of the teacher's intentions and plans, strategies and tactics, anxieties and exhilarations so that readers can both think and feel their way into the case's challenges" (p. 261).

In my own use of cases, I have come to value the view expressed by Amy McAninch (1993), that "narratives ought to be so broad that any one of them could be fruitfully used as a focus point for a wide array of educational theories" (p. 99). This open-ended approach gives the space for connections with personal narrative, so vital for discovering how our actions show us what we really think. It recognizes that we are all at different stages in our life, in our learning, and it allows the educational issues that we are each most struggling with, at the moment, to surface and be examined. In the reflection on these issues comes the awareness of the theories that frame our thinking. With this awareness, in the company of others struggling on this same journey, comes the opportunity for confirmation, for growth, for change.

When I began my graduate studies, I was certain that my interest in case-based instruction would become the major focus of my study and I would explore how to implement case-based instruction most effectively in courses that prepare students to work with children. Little did I realize that this was only the first piece in my teacher-researcher puzzle.

The research puzzle

I began to keep a journal to help me become more thoughtful about the courses in child development that I was teaching. I continued this written reflection, from 1994 to 1998, for the four years of this study. Writing in my journal after each class helped me to be so much more aware of what was happening in my classroom, of what Ellsworth (1989) calls the "multiplicity of knowledges present in the classroom" (p. 321). I was intrigued by the way my use of cases elicited personal stories and acted as catalysts to draw out the theories of child development usually explored in my courses in a more conventional way. I realized that I needed to further explore the place of personal story in my preparation of future teachers.

Rereading my journal every few weeks brought new insight, seen from a distance and colored by all the readings and graduate seminar discussions in-between. "The

challenge for teacher education programs is to develop reflective teachers who think about and learn from experience, yet the ordinary school setting does not lend itself to reflection. Too much is happening too fast in the messy world of practice for teachers to take the time to ponder what they are doing" (Shulman, 1992, p. 257). A journal provided that pondering time for me and I felt it would for my students too. Students would comment, from time to time, that my lengthy responses in their weekly journals felt like a real conversation that "got them thinking."

I began to videotape myself facilitating case-based discussion as a way to improve my case discussion skills. Reviewing myself on tape made me more thoughtful about how much I was talking and being the "expert" who directed the time we spent together and I began to wonder how well this was promoting the reflection I was trying to encourage students to do. As I puzzled about my place in the classroom and continued my studies and readings on teacher education, I became aware that as I made space for student voice, the authority in my classroom was beginning to shift. This became another piece of the puzzle to explore and one of the themes or "threads" that emerged during this study.

A colleague introduced me to the writings of Brookfield (1995) and Shor (1992) and I began to experiment with their suggestions for on-going consultation with students during my courses. I was impressed by how much more awake I was to my teaching, as I brought students into the process in a real way, and I puzzled about how this piece would fit into my study.

A later piece of the puzzle was organizing all the various data forms - my journal, student journals, videotapes, notes, focus groups, after-class groups - into field texts that would be in a form useable for a coherent reflection on the process I went through over the past four years. When it seemed rather overwhelming, I followed Jean's advice and "wrote myself into the study." Like a sculptor picking away at a block until a form emerges, I wrote constantly as a way to encourage themes to emerge that would somehow reveal a pattern, a form suitable for study. From these narrative beginnings in my own stories, and in my journal writing, emerged an awareness that the reflective practice demanded by a narrative study would be most suitable as an approach to my research - and the themes or "threads" I needed to triangulate this study gradually emerged.

The research journey continues: Emerging threads

Looking back on the journey through the field texts, the first thread to emerge came from my interest in cases and how they intertwined with students' personal stories of experience. In chapter three I examine how my interest in case-based instruction gradually blended with an interest in personal stories of experience in my teaching. Rather than an end in themselves, cases became a vehicle for eliciting stories of experience with children and stories from each student's own childhood. I found that discussions of other people's experiences became more meaningful when students were able to go the next step and connect them emotionally to their own experiences and found meaning in them articulated through sharing with classmates and writing in their journals.

As this first thread spun out, a second appeared and centered on my shifting authority in the classroom. Gradually, my interest in cases and personal stories of experience encompassed the larger issue of how my students were learning - how I was learning - and what that meant for me, the teacher in the classroom as I began to understand "where the questions that guide study are crafted" (Janesick, 1994, p. 212). Being a teacher-researcher in my own classroom made me more awake to what was happening there. The more I wrote about my attempts to facilitate case discussion or personal story sharing, the more I began to question my place in the classroom. As I shared the authority, making room for more student voice, I wondered how this shifting was affecting my place in the classroom. As my understanding of how my students were learning deepened, I became more thoughtful about examining my own habits long-engrained. All too often my journal refers to the overwhelming temptation to step in as the expert, to revert to old ways of being the teacher. Telling someone what they ought to see or do with children requires an act of faith on the part of the listener; I wanted to encourage acts of thinking. I wanted students to examine their own responsiveness to children and its long-term importance in children's lives. This aspect gradually emerged as "thread #2," my shifting authority in the classroom, the subject of chapter four.

As I continued writing and trying new ways of responding in my classroom, a new understanding appeared rather unexpectedly. I felt as if I had been working on the wrong side of a needlepoint. Turning it over to the right side, I was surprised to notice a whole new pattern I had not realized was there - that of a shifting relationship with students. I began to understand the importance of the emotional component of my

academic courses and to take the time, as Elizabeth Jones (1984) puts it, "to help prospective caregivers get in touch with children and with the child in themselves. When we teach child development and the other courses in the early childhood curriculum, what we are really trying to do is to enable students to understand what it is like to be a child" (p. 196). This new awakening to the importance of feeling as well as knowing in my teaching led quite unexpectedly into the third "thread" of this study, my shifting relationship with students, explored in chapter five.

It became a fascinating study - this struggling to understand how I know what I know in order to best help my students come to know what they need to know, so that they may best help the children they are with to know what they need to know. How to find my place within these layers that constantly shifted and interacted!

Overview

Rather than a base, my initial interest in case-based instruction became a launching pad for a journey into the study of my own teaching. My research and reflection on cases, and how I used them in my classes, led me to think more deeply about how people learn and what that means for the place of the teacher in the classroom. The focus of my study shifted from how to use cases in teacher education to how using cases to prepare teachers is quite dramatically affecting what I do, what my place is, in the classroom. My teaching became a collaborative process between myself and my students in which we all were learners wondering about the intriguing world of young children.

As Celia Oyler (1996) pointed out, we have "few in-depth studies of how teachers go about creating classrooms in which they utilize a more collaborative style of teaching. Although exhortations for teachers to create such collaborative classrooms abound in the professional literature, few writers have addressed the shift in power relations that this entails" (p. 9). Case-based instruction and personal stories were strong catalysts in helping me figure out how to share authority in my classroom. As students and I shared our stories, as we layered them with cases read and seen, the process of learning became more collaborative.

This study describes how the power relations in my own classroom shifted and how I struggled to both lead and follow. It is a reflection on the happenings within the

classrooms in which I found myself, what my place was in those classes where students were constructing what it means to be a teacher - while I was doing the same.

CHAPTER TWO

How This Study Was Done

I chose narrative inquiry as a research method as it focuses on the storied nature of human experience and on the interpretation and reinterpretation of experience. It seemed like an appropriate choice for an experienced teacher wishing to self-study and improve her own teaching in order to better prepare her students to be teachers. I needed to do myself what I was expecting my students to do. I wanted to model the reflection on my practice that I wanted them to do as they worked with children. Focusing on our stories of experience provided the narrative base from which to construct our learning about teaching children.

Reflection in teacher education that develops from narrative inquiry is the practice of focusing on each individual's experiences as expressed through his/her stories in order to explicate taken-for-granted knowledge about teaching and learning which has been constructed and reconstructed through experience. Each individual constructs his/her own meanings of the experience, shares his/her meanings with others as others share with him/her, and, in the process, each person learns new ways to think about the particular experience as well as new meaning to bring to future experience....we are each teachers/students/learners of teacher education as our knowledge and questions about teaching and learning are shared with each other. (Olson, 1993, p. 230)

Gradually, I allowed more and more space in my classroom for students to share their own stories and begin to question in that sharing what they had always known about children. However, when I started my research in 1994, I focused on stories of other people's experiences as "cases," ones that I found in the literature or in documentaries on television. I knew that case-based instruction was effectively being used in business administration, law and nursing, so why not in education? I was concerned about which cases to choose and how to cover the curriculum using them. The curriculum in child development is often textbook driven, so I searched for cases that connected with the major theories and topics of the text - cases that would capture the interest of my students and become "hooks" on which memory would snag and remain handy for quick recall once students were immersed in the daily whirlwind of working with children.

For example, one "hook" was a television documentary, *Nine Months To Life*, exploring the right of women in prison to keep their babies with them. This case invariably aroused strong opinions from the students and "hot" discussion. Their intense interest indicated to me that this case touched on vital concerns - ones I have recognized, from using this case over the past few years, as including such child development topics as attachment, punishment, parenting cycles and environmental influences. At another level, it addressed personal biases, judgmental attitudes and, especially, flexibility in thinking - the willingness to consider perspectives very different from one's own.

As I began my doctoral coursework in 1995, my interest in cases began to encompass my budding interest in personal stories as powerful cases to complement the ones I presented in class. As a graduate student in Jean's classes, I participated in story groups of fellow professionals where we each told and wrote about our experiences in teaching and found new insight in the sharing. I found these groups to be powerful vehicles for reflecting on practice and recognizing how my past teaching experiences were influencing my current practice. Sykes and Bird (1992, p. 509) use the phrase "research in the context of development," when they describe creating "rich and interesting case materials in a variety of settings for a variety of purposes, while simultaneously studying those uses." For me, working with how personal stories and prepared cases layered and interwove their meanings, was a process I could best see from the inside, as I watched it swirl around me and shape who I was as a teacher, my place in the classroom, how I could more effectively prepare teachers to work with children, and the form of this study.

As my research progressed, the changes in how I viewed myself in the classroom as I used cases, and how I understood how people learn, came to the foreground. As I struggled to become more of a facilitator of case discussion and less of an expert sharing information on child development, I faced the necessity of sharing my authority in the classroom. The more I understood that my students needed to articulate in order to think, the less I found myself articulating and the more I was compelled to figure out what I, as teacher, was to do instead.

Being in the Field

At the time of the study I was teaching at a community college in a northern Canadian city of approximately 40,000 people. My classes generally ranged from 15 to 20 students and were often a combination of adult learners, who had been away from school for some time, and students right out of high school. My courses, largely on child development, were enriched by this intergenerational mixture of experienced and inexperienced students. Some of my courses were taken by full-time students working on a certificate or diploma in early childhood and interested in becoming preschool or daycare teachers or aides for special needs children. I also taught child development in the university studies program for students working on a B.Ed. These were held in the evenings to accommodate a wide range of part-time learners.

In order to focus this study, I examined moments of on-going class interaction, chosen over time, in as fractal-like detail as possible, to try to understand what truly happened. As I taught my classes, I videotaped lessons and kept a journal. As I reviewed videotapes of class discussions, I closely examined classes that went especially well, where discussions became quite fascinating. I also looked closely at classes where things did not go as expected, where things fell flat, where I felt uncomfortable or where that feeling of intense interest just did not catch fire. Overall, it seemed that discussions flowed more freely and intensely the less I directed the discussion. As I gradually became more of a listener and "note taker" in whole class discussion, the more I marveled at how many of the points I would have made in a lecture-type format were brought up by the students. They also continued to surprise me by bringing up perspectives I had not considered. The enjoyment I began to experience as a learner and facilitator in my adult classes came the closest I have ever felt to how I am as a teacher of young children and how much this was the kind of model for teaching that I wanted to be for my students.

I found narrative inquiry particularly well suited to what was becoming a self-study, as it allowed me to pursue such issues that were emerging as most important in my teaching. Margaret Olson (1993) sums it up nicely by saying:

Narrative inquiry does not confirm what we already know, but rather makes us rethink what we thought we knew....[it] explores new possibilities which emerge during the research process and thus is a form of educative experience....each inquiry must take the

shape of what emerges during the process and as such each narrative inquiry is unique. Thus, it is impossible to set out a definitive set of steps in the process. (p. 251)

So what I began with was an evolving inquiry - it began, shifted and has since shifted again. Narrative inquiry helped me to keep things in perspective. As Margaret Olson (1993, p. 249) said, "If we are going to enable teacher education students to inquire into and make explicit their images of good teaching, we, as teacher educators, need to inquire into and make explicit our images of good teaching." The more I was willing to listen to my students, to review the effectiveness of each class, the more insight I gained on what was working well and what needed changing. It slowly became a truly collaborative learning process. To best help my students become effective teachers, I came to realize that I needed to start with myself. I needed to be more awake in my practice to become the best teacher I was able to be - in order to be the best model for future teachers that I was able to be. I found my research going through a transition - figuring out how I could inquire into this shifting sense of myself.

The important task in narrative inquiry, as described by Clandinin and Connelly (1994, p. 418) is the "retelling of stories that allow for growth and change." It is the "study of how humans make meaning of experience by endlessly telling and retelling stories about themselves that both refigure the past and create purpose in the future" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988, p. 24). Telling the story of my own teaching, as I am experiencing it, helps me to better understand my place as teacher in the classroom, even as my place keeps changing. Since personal stories of experience have been such a powerful lens for examining my own practice, I began to want to make sure that I provided the opportunity for that same experience for my students. This seemed to mark another "shifting" for me, from my focus on cases, to students talking about our classes together, to students talking about themselves.

Through journalling, through cases and discussion, I began to encourage my students to talk and write about childhood experiences, their experiences in school as students growing up and their experiences as beginning teachers (parents) in the lives of young children, that is, I asked them to tell their own stories. Recalling these experiences in their stories and voicing them to interested listeners brings them into focus. Why are some memories so vivid? What does a particular experience have to tell about how we interact with children now that we are in charge? Why is it important to begin to

understand that how we react in a certain situation with a certain child may have more to do with the child we were in the past than it does with the child actually facing us in the present?

Field Texts

The videotapes of my classes spanned a period of four years (1994 -1998) and focused on me, the teacher. As I reviewed the tapes, I was able to notice gradual, and sometimes fundamental, changes in my teaching over that period. Suzanne Wilson (1995) describes herself as a researcher and a teacher of social studies in much the same way that I would describe my experience:

Learning to do research has made me a better teacher....In the room and in relation with my students, I am teaching. I am also collecting information (journals, videotapes, interview transcripts, fieldnotes, students' work) that can be used in subsequent analyses. All of this work is driven by the same questions: What might it take to help students learn social studies in meaningful ways? Are my students learning?" (p. 20)

I find my teacher research has reawakened my curiosity about how students are learning in my classroom. Somehow, over the years, I had been lulled by a fascination that centered on me the teacher and how to best present my expertise. After each class and at other reflective times I wrote in my journal, knowing that I needed to create data, or what I call field texts, for my research. However, my journal became a way of thinking through my days in the classroom and, rather unexpectedly, a powerful way of thinking about my teaching.

The information gathered on the teaching and learning in my classroom is field text, as described by Clandinin and Connelly (1994, p. 419), that is, "texts created by participants and researchers to represent aspects of field experience." The field texts for this study include an on-going record of my practice and my reflection on that practice as contained in my research journals and in excerpts from student journals, additional reflections written in the margins as I reread my earlier journals, responses to my journal entries from my thesis advisor, videotapes of myself teaching and both formal and informal student evaluations. In addition, I met with whatever students were

available and willing at the end of each year, once all grades were completed, and videotaped my informal conversations with them. We talked about what they found most helpful in my courses, what was not particularly helpful and how any of this affected the work they were doing with children. I then selected segments to transcribe into written field text.

Interpreting Field Texts

By looking closely at particular moments of my teaching, in collaboration with my students, I attempted to uncover the meaning of what we spend our time doing together, at least from my perspective. Although this study is a very personal exploration of my place as teacher in the classroom, I believe it is also one that every teacher comes to grips with in her own way. As Duckworth (1986, p. 493) phrases it, research on a particular classroom or on a particular student "sheds light on the growth of understanding in general....Just as specifics can only be understood through generalities, so generalities can only be understood through specifics." Just as I was using specific stories or cases about children to illustrate general principles of child development, I also realized that reflecting on my own practice in a narrative study, looking at the "case" of myself developing as a teacher, could also be used to illustrate some general principles of effective teaching for teacher educators. This "nesting" seemed like such an efficient approach - teaching a course content while, at the same time, modeling an alternative approach to teaching while modeling an approach to thinking - and using a specific case of my own teaching when talking about using specific cases to illuminate child development theory.

The search for "patterns, narrative threads, tension and themes that constitute the inquiry that shapes field texts into research texts is created by the writer's experience" (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994, p. 423). As I reread my journals and made the "theoretical memos" in the margins, as described by Connelly and Clandinin (1988, p. 37), I looked for patterns and shifts in my teaching and the insights they brought. Detailed description and reflection, recorded over time, helped form the basis of my research text and of how I came to understand what my place is in the classroom. "Writing the story," as Merle Kennedy said, acts as a "catalyst for further interpretation" (1992, p. 36).

As I neared the end of the term in April of 1997 and wrote my thoughts on the end of the school year in my journal, I started to wonder what I was thinking at the end of the previous year and then the year before. I was curious to see if or how my thinking had changed as I again finished up a year of teaching child development. As I re-read all my April journal entries for the past three years, I typed out all the interesting parts - those that seemed to reflect most clearly what I was thinking at the time. This patchwork gave a form to my end of the year thinking that allowed me to look for threads and patterns.

As I did this, I became curious about the beginning of term and reviewed all my field texts from each January in the same way. The differences and similarities were so intriguing to me. For instance, biting my tongue, refraining from being the expert who tells others what they should do, proved to be particularly tenacious and re-appeared in journal entries year after year - and still do from time to time. Occasionally "blame the student" thinking cropped up in my journal to remind me of stereotypes hard to remove - was this really my voice? The biggest surprises came from those students who frankly shared their thoughts and prompted whole new lines of exploration for my own.

I continued this process from the beginning of September to the end of second term in April and then all the months in-between. For the final year of my thesis writing, 1998, I decided to continue writing my journal reflections on my teaching of child development courses each month as the school year progressed, with the sense as expressed by Clandinin and Connelly (1986, p. 384) that: "As practiced teachers we experience multiple embedded school cycles rhythmically." For the 1997-98 school year, I wrote with the awareness of the layers of all the previous years (1994 - 95 - 96) in cycles, coloring my thoughts. There is an echo of this search for ideas, patterns and themes in the rhizome metaphor used by Patti Lather (1994), when she describes the branching out in inquiry research, as having no trunk, no emergence from a single root, "but more like branchings off that can be mapped, not blueprinted....Rhizomatics are about the move from hierarchies to networks" in the research process, as in the classroom. Rather than a linear progress, rhizomatics is a "journey among intersections, nodes and regionalizations through a multi-centered complexity." (p. 45)

One node that often sent me off in unexpected directions was my use of the after/class group, suggested first by Jean and then by Ira Shor (1992) in *Empowering Education*. I started these groups to generate field text, but soon became aware that students had lots

of suggestions for my courses. We would discuss and collaborate on their ideas and often implement them. I had not realized until this process was well underway that one unexpected rhizome from this was the students beginning to view me in a different light - as a very understanding, caring person - surprisingly unexpected for me as most early childhood instructors are generally seen in this light and I had not expected to stand out just for listening. So simple, yet it took me over fifteen years to truly understand the power of this.

The rhizome image describes so well the process that unfolded as I progressed through this study of my own teaching. As I was busy examining one strand, I would find it intertwined with others, blending and shaping one another and often leading in directions I had not anticipated: the use of cases, how cases triggered personal stories, how discussions and journals expanded student thinking, how all this expanded my thinking about curriculum, how narrative framed this study as personal narratives enriched what was being studied, how videotape and debriefing sessions brought new perspectives to years-long habits, how myself as student shaped myself as teacher, finding my voice as teacher-researcher, helping my students find theirs, journal writing, responding to student journals, conversations with students, talking to my fellow teacher - researchers at the university, interacting with my college colleagues, story groups in Jean's courses, watching my students interact with children, reinventing myself as teacher. As I review the litany, the network of connections, rhizomatics does not seem like too fancy a term after all.

Finding ways to make spaces for my students' voices was one way I found to "decenter" myself as researcher and convince myself of the growth that comes with the idea of sharing authority, as described by Oyler (1996). After/class groups and end of the year focus groups were wonderful "shaker-uppers" to get me to view the commonplace from different perspectives. Re-viewing videotapes of each type of session made me realize the difference between the two. After/class groups focused on the class immediately finished and how to improve what we did in the next class. The focus groups, however, tended more to take an overview of the whole course and how it affected them in practical ways once they were out in the workplace dealing with children. Having these conversations on videotape allowed me to transcribe some of the comments word for word, a tedious process that, nevertheless, forced me to focus on the nuances of what students said, as reflected in this journal entry:

I noticed that as I type direct quotes of students I hear more clearly what's being said than when I just view the tape. I find I often miss some of the words, spoken quickly by some fast talkers, and the meaning doesn't sink in until I find those words by rewinding a few times and typing them out. (Journal, March 8, 1997)

In setting out on this research journey, I was reassured by the observation of Connelly and Clandinin (1988) that "...it is the teachers' 'personal knowledge' that determines all matters of significance relative to the planned conduct of classrooms" (p. 4), and "there is no better way to study curriculum than to study ourselves" (p. 31). What I knew intuitively, the place I needed to start - with my teacher-self - was validated.

Through interpreting the writing and rewriting and restorying of my teaching that this narrative study entailed, by exploring each rhizome surfacing on the journey, all seemed gradually to trickle and intertwine into three main themes or threads: how my interest in case-based instruction developed into a realization of the power personal stories bring to our interactions with children, how making a place for student voice, as I better understood the learning process, shifted my authority in the classroom and how this whole process gradually shifted my relationship with students.

Writing Texts: Research Issues

When one is doing a self-study, the question of truthfulness arises. Examining my teaching is a journey of my own to become a better teacher. I have tried not to fool myself. This study may somehow prove useful to other teachers as a model of reflection, rather than a thesis in the typical sense, with "findings" to replicate. As described by Cranston-Gingras, Raines, Paul, Epanchin, and Rosselli (1996):

... the scholarly task is not separated from self or from community. Rejecting the pretext of innocence (objectivity, rigor, and generality) in the traditional research community, the TCRG [Teaching Cases Collaborative Research Group at USF] considers owning responsibility for what we know and how we know it both a moral responsibility and an epistemological challenge. (p. 165)

Stenhouse (1982, p. 266) writes that this critical selection of information for a tenable interpretation can "achieve a synthesis which carries meaning and rings true." I have selected those sections of my field texts that give particular meaning to my study to

become a better teacher. They "ring true" for me. I am not searching for certainty for anyone other than myself, knowing that what may be certain at this point in my teaching may become uncertain as I continue to reflect in my future teaching. This narrative study is part of an on-going process, not a final product. As expressed by Clandinin and Connelly (1990, p. 245), "the judgment of whether or not one is 'telling the truth' has to do with criteria such as adequacy, possibility, depth, and a sense of integrity. There is no 'quest for certainty' in the writing of narrative." At this stage of my reflecting on my teaching, the notion of "shifting authority," as described by Oyler (1996), helped me develop a perspective on the process I had undertaken. My use of cases in the classroom shifted to include personal stories, my role of "expert" shifted to include student voice and, as a result, my relationship with students also shifted. This notion of shifting helped me tease out the three main themes or threads of this narrative study that make the most sense to me at this stage of my understanding of the work I do.

By definition, narrative is a "messy" process. "Attempting to do research through, on, or about one's teaching necessarily lands one in a complicated epistemological, practical and intellectual bog" (Wilson, 1995, pp. 21-22). The emphasis of my study gradually shifted from product (use of cases) to process (how using case-based instruction was changing who I was in the classroom). This was infinitely more fascinating even as it became more "bog-like." Even as the process helped me improve my teaching, and as the writing of it may hopefully inspire another, I am still mindful of the bogginess that Wilson (1995) describes when she wonders:

What are our blind spots, places where our defensive selves make it impossible for us to 'see' clearly? Of particular interest to me right now is the issue of imposed rationality: Accounts of our thinking and action are presented as being more reasoned, gracious, and thoughtful than is humanly possible. (I am thinking here of the contrast between teacher/researchers' account of their thought and fictional accounts of mind by Faulkner, Joyce or Woolf.). (p. 21)

For my own part, I tried to be faithful to my journal, taking excerpts as I found them. I did, however, correct grammatical errors, delete repetitions or references that might prove embarrassing to others, clarify ambiguous word order and remove various forms of whining that I am sure helped relieve stress at the time, but would not prove particularly enlightening to the reader. My journal thoughts, however, warts and all, have found their way into this thesis. This honesty was made less painful by the realization, after being in the midst of teacher conversations for decades, that my

struggles are widely shared. Articulation, for myself as for my students, is a process and it is in that process that understanding emerges, whatever the context.

Acknowledging that there will inevitably be blind spots and touches here and there of "imposed rationality," the benefits to my students, as I uncover the meaning of my teaching through this study, encouraged me to continue on. This examining of one's own teaching could be called an "observation of operations ...described and interpreted." It is an attempt at the "thick description" of practice that would describe it in "sufficient detail so that the reader can make good comparisons" (Stake, 1994, pp. 241-242). However, the more fundamental meaning of "thick," and the one most appropriate to my study, is about "the uncovering of meaning as understood by persons...in a sense, the opposite to 'surface' meaning." (McKay, 1995, personal communication).

Significance of the Methodology

By closely examining my own stories of what I was attempting to do in my own teaching and learning, and having conversations with those who shared this experience with me (Newman, 1992), I became more aware of what "patterns of case-based instruction promote transfer of knowledge and skill to situations in teaching and how this modifies novices' prior beliefs, values, and assumptions" (Sykes and Bird, 1992, p. 513), as well as the effect of this approach on modifying what I do as the teacher. Both Sykes and Bird (1992) and Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1992) speak to this. "In teacher research communities, the task of teachers is not simply to produce research....Rather, the commitment of teacher researchers is change - in their own classrooms..." (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1992, p. 214). "The close study of actual teaching with cases can contribute a literature useful in helping case teachers refine their practice" (Sykes and Bird, 1992, p. 510). Little in the case-based instruction literature addresses how adopting that strategy may affect the teacher herself. How adopting a new approach (such as case-based instruction) led me to reexamine who I am as a teacher may be of interest to other teachers seeking to improve their own practice and the way future teachers are prepared to work with children.

"I believe all researchers stand in some relation to their subject; the reader simply deserves to know where I stand before watching these classroom events along with me"

(Fine, 1993, p. 416). I hope the foregoing description has helped the reader know where I have stood as I watched the events in my own classroom.

The more ways I found to articulate what I wanted to do, the more aware I became of how students were learning, and the more my place as teacher in the classroom was shaped. By understanding what makes up my own curriculum, I came to "better understand the difficulties, whys, and wherefores of the curriculum of my students" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988, p. 31). This study documents a small part of this complex process, as it occurred in the layers of learning in which my students and I found ourselves.

Duckworth (1986) describes so well what I am attempting in this study - the kind of teacher-researcher I am striving to be:

This kind of researcher would be a teacher in the sense of caring about some part of the world and how it works enough to want to make it accessible to others; she would be fascinated by the questions of how to engage people in it and how people make sense of it; she would have time and resources to pursue these questions to the depth of her interest, to write what she learned, and to contribute to theoretical and pedagogical discussions on the nature and development of human learning. (p. 494)

The Process from Field to Field Texts to Research Texts

Narrative inquiry, self-study and the use of journaling fit within this inquiry into my own teaching. As stated by Richardson (1996):

There is no formal research methodology associated with practical inquiry, although recent acceptance of qualitative research has accompanied an increased interest in and advocacy of practical inquiry. The telling of narrative and story, dialogical conversations about practice, and writing of journals have been advocated for this type of inquiry. (p. 268)

However, not much is said about how exactly one goes about organizing and analyzing this type of data. With support from my advisor, I gradually devised my own methods. Although cumbersome at best, it too became a part of the learning process - a part of the

narrative inquiry to help me understand what it is I am about when I am teaching. Sifting through all my journal entries over the past four years, 1994 - 1998, and analyzing the data accumulated seemed a daunting task. To begin, in the summer of 1997, I read through all my journals since 1994 and typed into my computer all the sections that related to my teaching, leaving out the unrelated personal references and the inevitable complaints about administration. I filed these by months and labeled the sections as May, 1997 reflections on September; May, 1997 reflections on October; and so on through April.

I then reviewed those sections two months at a time: September and October, 1994, 1995, 1996 and 1997 became one "chunk," November and December, 1994, 1995, 1996 and 1997 another, followed by January and February, 1995, 1996, 1997, and 1998 and March and April, 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998. As I read each "chunk," I listed, in handwriting, the major topics that seemed to come up during each of those months. I checked in red the sections of the excerpted journals that corresponded with the topics in my handwritten list and wrote down thoughts as they occurred to me as I went through this process.

My advisor, Jean, also read the transcripts and together we discussed possible themes for the handwritten topics. Jean suggested I look for threads that related to shifting authority and that brought it all into focus. I searched for all references to my shifting authority in the classroom and highlighted them in green. This theme became one "thread" of my study. Another thread that stood out was how my understanding of case-based instruction shifted to incorporate personal stories as a way to organize the curriculum for my courses. I highlighted this thread in yellow. The third thread that seemed to press out at this point was my shifting relationship with students, which I highlighted in pink.

I read each section many times, reflecting and writing on the nuances and patterns I noticed, to help me get a grasp of the overall flow of events in my classroom over time. I wondered if reading through September of each year from 1994 to 1997 and then addressing October over the years, and then each month in turn, might be confusing to the reader, but it was for me the most interesting way to organize the writing. The weaving back and forth across the years, for each month, reminded me over and over of what I was thinking then and what I was thinking now. I thought of the years as a kind of warp, the vertical strands on a loom, through which I wove each weft-month. The

patterns were more noticeable this way and the contrast of this warp and weft seemed to deepen my understanding of the process of articulation I have been experimenting with over the past four years. Working in periods of two months gave me a manageable amount to write about and reflect on at one time: September - October reflected the beginnings of each cycle. November - December is in the middle of things and reflected thoughts at the end of a first term. January - February marked the beginning of second term and March - April, the end of the year.

As I begin to write the final research text, in January, 1998, each main thread (my use of case-based instruction, my shifting authority in the classroom, and my shifting relationship with my students) became a chapter in my study. In each of these chapters I wove excerpts from each month of the school year. For instance, I read all my September entries over the past four years and plucked out pieces that seemed interesting or got me thinking. As I patched these pieces together - for September, for October and through the school cycle, fall to spring, I looked for meaning in the seams. As I wrote the connecting links from journal entry to journal entry, the "seams," the piecing together, gave me a sense of the overall growth in myself as teacher, as well as a sense of how the timing and pacing of each season affected student voice in my classroom.

From time to time in this study, I have re-read past journals and reflected on them in my journal. I did not want to wait until the very end of collecting my field texts to do this, but, rather, to continue to review my field texts as I went along and continue to get insight on my teaching as well as on my thesis process. An example of this appears in the following 1997 journal entry, as I reflect on just how difficult awareness and change can be.

It's eerie. I just finished reflecting in my current journal on my education class last night and opened my 1994 journal today to continue my reading and found that I was talking about the same topic - attachment - and the same struggles - my talking too much - not allowing enough time for small group discussion of the cases - trying to push the class on, rather than pay attention to the pace set by students.....

This was three years ago. I can't believe I'm repeating the same mistakes. If I weren't keeping this research journal, I would assume I'd completely changed and am doing things differently now. I would have no sense of how difficult it is to break engrained habits. For me, this means being patient with my own slow progress, and by extension, being

patient with the progress of my students and fellow professionals. Maybe the biggest learning I will take from this study will be a very clear understanding of how difficult it is to change, even when your commitment and all your energy is poured in that direction. It helps me better understand difficult children I have known. No wonder they kept repeating patterns emotionally engrained from birth. No wonder they couldn't just change in the time I spent with them, even when they wanted to. It's so difficult. It helps me to appreciate that notion that we are all "works in progress." (Journal, February 14, 1997)

As I went through each month of this final year, 1997 - 1998, I kept an on-going journal of my current thinking about my teaching and re-read each month all of the previous entries from that month over the past four years. For example, for the month of January, I began with thread one: references to case-based instruction. I printed out the January's file created last summer and read through it, color coding all the references to case based instruction in yellow. Using this coded document, I printed out all the yellow sections into a new file labeled #1 cases and put it into a folder labeled January, 1995 - 1998. I edited as I went, keeping the yellow coded items that seemed the most illustrative of my shifting use of cases.

I sent a draft of my first section, reflections on thread one (cases from September through December) to my advisor, Jean, and revised following her suggestions. This revising got me back into the flow of my comments on case-based instruction for all the previous months. Then I went through the January entries for the past four years and wrote comments that seemed to connect the entries and say something about their significance. I printed that first draft out and read and re-read and revised until the pages were too marked to read easily and needed typing. I would then type a "clean" copy and revise and put it together with the case-based comments from all the previous months and read through a few times, making any changes that suggested themselves. I usually let these sections lie fallow overnight or for a day or two and then went back again for final readings and revisions until I could not find anything else to change.

I went through the same process for February and sent the whole package - Thread #1: Cases from September to February off to Jean for her revisions. I went back to the color-coded document and went through the same process for Thread #2: shifting authority and for Thread #3: personal relationships with students. I sent a package to Jean almost every week, on one of the three threads, each time adding a two-month

segment. At the very end I waited until May to add the 1998 entries that were written in the previous two months.

A good summary of the self-study research process that I have attempted to do is provided by Stefinee Pinnegar (1998) when she describes it as seeking

as its hallmark not claims of certainty, but evidence that researchers, however stumblingly, demonstrate in their practice the understandings they have gained through their study. Self-study researchers seek to understand their practice settings. They observe their settings carefully, systematically collect data to represent and capture the observations they are making, study research from other methodologies for insights into their current practice, thoughtfully consider their own background and contribution to this setting, and reflect on any combination of these avenues in their attempts to understand. They utilize their study to represent for others what they have come to understand in their own practice and ultimately to perfect and improve the quality of their own practice setting. (p. 33)

In writing Chapter One, the introduction, I tried to give an overview of the whole process to guide the reader through the study. In this chapter I have described how I went about creating field texts for this narrative study. Chapters three, four and five describe the three main "threads" of my study: my shifting view of cases and personal stories, my shifting authority in the classroom, and shifting relationships with students. In the conclusion, I reflect on how much I have learned as a teacher-researcher from this whole process.

CHAPTER THREE

Thread #1: Shifting View of the Use of Cases and How People Learn September - April (1994 through 1998)

"Case studies work! And observations work! And working with kids works! Reading and memorizing does not - work!" (Focus group, May, 1995)

The use of cases has been a thread that runs throughout this exploration of my own teaching. As the student above rather emphatically stated, cases "worked" for students and that encouraged me to continue to explore how best to use them in my classroom. As I read through my journal, for all the months from 1994 through 1998, I can see a significant shift in my understanding of what case-based instruction is and in how I use cases in my classroom. This process seems to reflect my understanding of how people learn and how that learning helps them as they work with children.

I am fascinated with this cyclical view of my teaching: what I was thinking as each new school year started with students, what I was thinking once the first semester was winding to a close, what I was thinking each January, as we started up classes in the second term, and in April, as each year wound to a close. Do I play the same tune at each juncture year to year, or is there some evidence of growth as a teacher, a professional, a person? "Is there a relational pattern across all teaching of this type that is about the cycle of the class?" (Pinnegar, 1998, personal communication). Perhaps I notice and question my talking in class more as the term progresses and students become more confident, than at the beginning when routines and rapport are being established and more direction is needed.

I first started my research journal, in July, 1994, during the Summer Institute with Jean Clandinin at the University of Alberta. I had been experimenting with cases in my college classroom during that past winter term and my journal comments, at that time, reflect my interest in compiling a "casebook" similar to those used in other disciplines using case-based instruction, especially business and law. For me, cases were descriptions of real-life situations in which teachers found themselves, which would serve to illustrate basic principles of good teaching practice. After studying a case, students would be more likely to remember the theories embedded in the situations and

be more apt to apply those principles of good teaching in their own classrooms with children. I had been audiotaping stories of teaching told to me by fellow graduate students that summer in an attempt to begin to compile a "casebook" that I could use in my classes:

Finished transcribing my third case - no wonder no one's teaching this way - what a lot of work....wonder if I should put in a proposal for a transcriber...how very hard it is to accurately compress an oral story into an acceptable-to-the-author version. (Journal, July, 14, 1994)

As I reflect on this four-year-old entry, I remember that this collecting of stories was quite a tedious process. My fellow students generously shared their stories and time - talking into my little tape recorder, reading my typed transcript, suggesting changes that sometimes made the stories more accurate (and sometimes more flattering), re-reading the new version, and then signing a release form giving me permission to use the story with my students. In the end, very few lent themselves to classroom use as I realized that stories about teaching school-aged children did not usually fit the issues needing to be addressed in my early childhood courses preparing professionals to work with preschoolers and families.

I was also beginning to think more about Schon's (1987) work on self-reflection in teaching and about sharing one's own experiences in the classroom and how that fit into case-based instruction and learning from past experiences:

Conceptualizing case study in education / teacher training. If Harvard continues to improve on its use of cases, no need for us to slavishly follow their path. How to learn from their experience - take what's essential, proven effective, and adapt (not water down) for education. What does this mean? My only insight so far is the benefit I see students getting from reflecting on their own experiences (personal "cases") and sharing / writing them. (Journal, July 17, 1994)

As I reflect on my data from **September**, 1995, I seem to be viewing cases more as a way to reveal student thinking than as a vehicle to carry content. For example, the next journal entry describes our class discussion after we have read a selection from Brazelton and Cramer (1990), in which a depressed mother is helped to recognize how her own problems are affecting her relationship with her baby. Our discussion branched off into how students, as future professionals, could best help parents see the good in their children, how the problems of one generation are played out in the next, the

interactive nature of relationships and how all these dynamics affect their own work in child care settings. As I read the data now, I remember that the reading drew out discussion of the students' past family relationships and current experiences in centres with children, and how they think about the behaviors of children. Rather than simply the content Brazelton had in mind, his writing evoked a myriad of personal themes varying from student to student.

Some seem to find critical issues in discussing the videos, others seem unsure of what's expected. Case-based approach takes time to develop thinking.....I could speak less. Getting better at reflecting the points students are making. Still act as traffic cop - when many want to speak at once. Could perhaps let them figure it out more - who speaks when, without my jumping in. I may seem to want to make sure everyone gets her turn, but maybe it's more like still wanting to be in charge....I've been rotating around the room, listening in to various discussions. I hear a wide variety of topics that spring out from the "launching pad" case. Why do different groups come up with different topics? Does it have to do with what individuals need to think through when it comes to children and developing? (Journal, September 21, 1995)

By the second year of my study, I am less interested in how to use cases as other disciplines do and much more interested in how a case becomes a starting place for students to examine those child development issues most important to them and to the children with whom they work. As I read through my rather lengthy entries for September, 1997, I was surprised that the word "case" was not mentioned once! I am still using some of the cases from previous years, interwoven with current event ones, but I think I now see them as an integral part of the program, rather than as an end in themselves (as in "discuss this case to arrive at these conclusions"):

I feel like this is the first September when I've thought a lot about *how* the student will be learning, rather than just making a good course outline and figuring out what classroom activities to start with. I feel a lot more professional about all this. Is it the thesis research? My advancing age? Probably a combination of all that, as well as the responses of last year's students. I think I've tried to honor what they have expressed as most helpful for them in the learning process. (Journal, September 6, 1997)

Re-reading past journals helped me reflect on the present. In addition to the content and issues implicit in a case discussion, the process more and more became a valuable part of the experience. Communications skills needed to keep a good discussion flow -

listening to others, respecting their thoughts, clarifying one's own - are the same skills needed by teachers as they work with children, parents and colleagues. In 1994 I said

...it's the habit of reflecting that this course needs to encourage rather than the right or wrong answer in any particular situation." Seems like a good hook to hang on to - an easy one to forget. Although I may have mentioned it as a goal of ours in the past, this year it will be one that I keep re-emphasizing in order to free up discussion to be more open. If students can learn to be accepting of one another's articulations as works in progress - as "what I think at the moment, but I may already be changing my mind as I say this" - then I think our discussion format will be quite helpful for them as they work with children, fellow teachers and especially parents. (Journal, September 8, 1997)

When I started this study, I thought of case-based instruction in education as being similar to its use in other disciplines and coming in the standard form of a written casebook. Cases were vehicles to carry course content written by other people, often in textbook form, with specific purposes and discussions in mind. I found that some educational casebooks even come with questions the instructor can use to direct the discussion, and guidelines suggesting how to keep the group "on topic" and help students ingest the course content decided upon by the "experts."

As I went back to my research journal, to re-read all my entries for **October** (from 1994 to the present, 1998), I saw a stronger emphasis on cases as vehicles to draw out each person's stories of experience. Sharing personal stories of experience seemed to help students articulate their current understanding of children and either reaffirm that understanding or begin to question it. I like the way Jean Clandinin describes this process:

We began to know our own stories better by hearing others' stories. As we listened to others' stories, we not only heard echoes of our own stories, but saw new shades of meaning in them. We learned to value each time we wrote in our journals, responded to another's journal, told one of our stories, and listened to another's story. Through these experiences we gained new possibilities for writing our lives differently. (Clandinin, 1993, p. 2)

My understanding of the value of cases shifted when I began to see them - in both written and video form - as vehicles to help students find the theories embedded in practice. Cases drew out personal stories - those concrete everyday responses that

demonstrate how a person truly understands a concept and expresses one's own philosophy of child development in the bones. I began to make that link in 1994, when I wrote:

Amazed how discussion groups, whether based on own personal cases (stories) or ones I present to the class, generate loads of new topics that guide my planning of the next classes. Lots of stories in journals to be used as springboards for child development theory. (Journal, October 17, 1994)

By October of each term, as early as 1994, we were into cases and ways to pry out learning with them. My videocases generated so much spontaneous discussion of personal experiences related to the video topic that the reluctance to share personal stories at the beginning of the term evaporated quickly for most of the students. Initially, perhaps because of limited experience in the classroom, students shared stories simply as stories. I found I needed to guide the process to help them begin to make links between their stories and the theories of child development and notice how they are learning from their experiences. The next journal entry refers to both this theory-practice link and also to the personal-professional link that students begin to establish as they explore how their own experiences influence their practice as a professional working with children:

Education class worked with own stories in groups of four. They tended to be rather brief in their stories and don't automatically make connections as experienced teachers would do. When we returned to whole group, some spoke out and gave examples of how childhood experiences *would* connect with their future work with children. (Journal, October 5, 1994)

Some students (in all three classes) making connections beautifully by telling a personal story - reflecting on what it might mean - making links with child development theory - and then how it may influence their work with children. Many, however, tell a story and don't take the next step to reflection. I encourage this with questions and comments in their journals and by lightly doing the same as I circulate during group discussion time. (Journal, October 21, 1994)

I began to understand how cases, and the personal stories they elicit, can reveal a person's understanding of a concept. They can be vehicles to help a person *articulate* what she knows, compare it with what others (in class and in readings) know, and gradually evolve a better understanding of children in the process. My awareness of the power of personal experience was growing in 1995, when I wrote in my journal some

personal comments I heard students make in small group discussion after watching *When The Bough Breaks* . This video-documentary follows one mother's unthinking attempts to force-feed her two-year-old and unexpectedly elicited from some students their true feelings on the issue at odds with the best practices in the child development field:

"So, does your family have these issues?" "What if you don't make your kids eat things - they'd only eat what they like over and over."
(Journal, October 12, 1995)

I was surprised to hear these comments after we had all seen a video that made clear the problems of "making" children eat what adults have decided they should. Students' responses to cases have become a Paley-like (Paley, 1988) revelation to me of what students are really thinking. I feel I am beginning to understand the dynamic character of learning in contrast to the "force-fed" version that used to subtly underlie all of my teaching. (What an interesting image - students questioning the force-feeding of a child while I am questioning something not so dissimilar in my own teaching!)

As students shared their personal experiences with children, their issues helped to guide our exploration of subsequent child development topics, rather than my simply following the chapters in the child development text, step by step, as I had done in the past.

Balancing large and small group discussion time during case-based instruction was something that I continued to experiment with over the years. My next entry refers to one day when I realized that large group discussion, as I have been doing it for years, was not especially effective:

One student very tired, snoozing in class. She's a good barometer. When class is irresistible, she wakes up. When dull, she drowns. She's wide-awake for videos - very active, participating - sharp in small group discussion. She dozed in large group review directed by me. Even though other classes have asked for more large group time, I think this group is more engaged during smaller group discussion - perhaps too soon in the year to feel as comfortable speaking out in whole class discussion? (Journal, October 12, 1995)

Indicators, like the above situation with the "snoozing" student, led me to question, in general, how compelling the strategy of *teacher-directed* large group discussion really is - even though its effectiveness seems to be taken for granted in case-based instruction. I wondered how to adjust my place in the discussion to help large group discussions become as compelling for the students as small group discussions often are.

As we worked with cases and personal stories, I recall that I struggled with how much guidance to give to large group discussions: How much time is needed for a student to feel comfortable speaking up? When do I need to step in and guide them back to the importance of the process and of personal connections?

Had "hot" discussion going on the topic of AIDS and allowing one's own child to play with children who are HIV positive. I called a halt after ten minutes or so, because I wanted to get on to other topics. Never sure whether to let it go on until everyone's finished. I suggested we halt when a few were into a distinct disagreement. Better to have let discussion continue or switch them to new information (their choice or my choice)? (Journal, October 18, 1995)

Now, in 1998, I let "hot" discussions continue, and I quietly rearrange my priorities. I think I am learning to recognize those moments when students are emotionally engaged and attentive, as the moments of intense learning when we have hit on a topic that challenges their thinking. I am beginning to trust that although I may not be aware of its personal meaning to each person, their engagement signifies learning is happening and that they are discovering a part of child development that needs thoughtful and intense discussion. I remind myself that there is no particular "order" of topics set in stone. I keep track of the score and provide support as needed; they are in charge of moving the ball up and down the court. My journals seem to show an increasing awareness of the need to facilitate thinking about an issue, rather than telling them what to think:

...Noticed that with Malina case (Brazelton and Cramer, 1990), the class was able to extend connections to themselves, having a child in their class with a depressed parent, but not to what if they themselves were depressed and affecting children. Wish I could think of a better way to frame questions or comments that let students come to such a realization themselves. This time I just *told* them what to think (knowing full well that it means so much more to discover, than to be told)! (Journal, October 20, 1995)

I know the power of my own stories of experience with children to guide my future actions with children, once they have been reflected on and shared. I know from the story groups in Jean's courses that hearing others' stories can sometimes have a lasting impact on how I think about children and teaching. In October, 1995, I wondered if this same power might extend to a story shared by a person in a video documentary (in this case, Egan Haden of Winnipeg in the CBC documentary *Nine Months To Life*). I notice each year, as students watch this documentary, that they are, at first, very critical of mothers keeping their babies in prison with them, and very critical of the mothers themselves.

It is not until Egan Haden shares her story in detail, of prostitute to social worker, that I notice some students begin to consider the complexities of the situation. Egan was the first Canadian to successfully challenge the rule against keeping babies with their mothers in prison. As we watch Egan at home with her daughter, now a teenager, and follow her as she returns to the Kingston prison for a visit, the perceptions of many of the students start to shift. They begin to see things from Egan's point of view. When they start to see with Egan's eyes, they begin to understand the complexity of child development issues that this videodocumentary contains. It is harder to maintain an "us versus them" mentality. One purpose of this video has become its power to challenge students to consider other points of view, very different from their own, an ability critical for professionals working with children and families.

...Took a few minutes to review opinions based on first fifteen minutes of [*Nine Months to Life* video] ..perhaps should have done whole group discussion at this point - darn! ...can one person's powerful story on video change a philosophical stance on the part of the listener? (Journal, October 28, 1995)

I have just realized, as I write this in 1998, that my use of videocases is predicated on the assumption that watching and hearing one person in a documentary, struggling with an issue, will motivate students to think of the issues as if they, themselves, were in that situation or a similar one. I wonder if this is true? The immediacy of video - the impact of a personality and the non-verbal messages - seem to be more strongly motivating for many of our students than reading what someone has to say about an issue. I wonder if it is nearly as strong as having the speaker present in class?

Watching myself facilitating case discussion on videotape has been so helpful in reminding me how difficult it is to curb the urge for me to talk - to be the expert. In October, 1996, I still found I was talking too much and the mechanics of guiding a good case discussion were still uppermost in my mind:

My comments after discussion on videocase went five to six minutes. Longer than I'd like. I need to cut down my commentary, which was about 16 minutes out of 60. One quarter of the class is more than I want to be talking. (Journal, October 9, 1996)

...perhaps it would be better to look up rather than focus on my notes. I think I chose to do that so that students wouldn't keep looking at me, but rather look at and talk to each other. Think I should look up more - and then look down if discussion starts to be directed to me again. In the early stages of these discussions (early in the year), I notice that I interrupt once in a while to keep group on topic - or move group on to other issues once one has been covered pretty thoroughly.

I asked a question about the video and the response that came from a student was unrelated to my question. She added to something she had said before, that was evidently uppermost in her mind. My question was lost in the following conversation (probably a sign of genuine discussion).

I nod my head a lot - seems to express that I'm listening. I need to remember to stay comfortable with silences. At the end of the tape, I revert back to a conversation-style teaching in which discussion goes back and forth from student to instructor. There were times when I posed a question and answered it. Could have remembered to phrase issues as questions and allow students to answer, with my filling in any gaps at the end. (Journal, October 17, 1996)

As I watched these videotapes of myself in class, during a case discussion, I find I was still concerned, in 1996, with the mechanics of the process and especially with limiting my own "air-time." Changing from the expert who talks the most in class, to a listener who helps students reflect on their own thoughts, has been a major shift - one that has taken three years so far.

The word *case* does not appear in any of my journal entries for October, 1997. As I am still using case-based instruction, perhaps this means that the mechanics of the process no longer bother me. I seem to be much more concerned with what students are learning and how I am helping that happen. However, there is always something new to learn, when refining one's teaching, and old habits die hard, as reflected in the next entry:

I timed my videotape and noticed that I took 6 minutes to comment on their 40-minute discussion. Later, in the after/class group, one student suggested that rather than mention additional issues to consider, it might be helpful to continue the discussion with me as a participant. As I listen to myself list off the supplementary issues, I think this would be a very good idea to try next time. (Journal, October 20, 1997)

These after/class group comments remind me now, in 1998, that whole class discussions, at the beginning of the year, do need some direct instructor guidance. My talking at the beginning of the semester cycle can support the learner as she builds the confidence and skills to continue on her own. Rather than remove myself "cold turkey," I think I need to follow student advice and be part of the discussions at first, then gradually remove my presence as they become more independent. I know that by second term, group discussions carry on very well without my guidance. As I watch myself on videotape, it is all too easy to revert to the old habit of directing the discussion when students flounder. I need to be more sensitive to giving whole group discussion, in the early stages, all the support required, without allowing the process to be dependent on me. The next journal excerpt refers to watching a videotape of myself teaching in which I notice my "expert" self resurfacing in the discussion, followed by that old habit of having discussion directed from students to me, rather than to each other:

Timed myself talking for 13 minutes at a stretch. I could, at one point, have thrown it out for group discussion and removed myself from the back and forth: instructor-to-student-and-back format. These old habits are insidious and I wouldn't have noticed my slipping without my videotaping. (Journal, October 31, 1997)

Some old shoes are just so comfortable, you slip into them, completely forgetting that these are the ones that damage your feet. If I do not continue to videotape myself from time to time I am afraid the old and comfortable will reassert itself. How does one make the new and more effective become the familiar? For instance, I have struggled for years with active listening and often do it automatically. But I still catch myself forgetting to listen, in situations where it would be most appropriate. All this - active listening - not talking too much - comes from reflection in practice (or after practice, as it sometimes happens). My progress, though, seems to be measured in level of awareness, rather than in level of perfecting. It seems that my journal writing, over the past four years, has not only documented my thinking; it has shaped it.

As I read through my journals from each **November**, starting with 1994, I noticed that my journal entries referred to cases and personal stories in the same line. They have become a linked noun, a tandem vehicle to carry the theories and principles of child development. At the beginning of every year, each new group of students seems to need coaching in drawing out the principles from particular cases and personal stories. By each November, finding the principles embedded in the particular seems to come more easily for many and the process seems to help students become more thoughtful about how their interactions with children, and with their colleagues, reflect their understandings of child development theory. As I read my journal entries, I realized how much the particular and the general are both expressions of the same concept, although I have not always taught with that clear connection. I wonder how it came about that theory, in the abstract, seems to be held in higher esteem than theory embodied in stories.

Cases - personal stories - take the learner from the particular to the general theory / principles. Usual method: general theory explained in detail with a brief example or two. Much more interesting for students to start with personal experience. Am finding that for those with limited experience with children, connections are not automatically drawn. Need lots of coaching to draw out what principles / theories might be embodied in a particular example. As Eisner (1988, p. 19) says: "...the test of theory is how well it enables us to deal with our practical tasks." This helps confirm for me the whole notion of child development theory embedded in cases and personal narrative.

I think that cases / personal stories is a valid approach as it starts with the familiar - the affect as well as the fact - and grounds principles / theory for students. Practicing teachers seem to make connections more quickly, with less coaching. (Journal, November 12, 1994)

It takes some convincing to persuade students that they already hold theories about children, and that, as they tell their stories, their theories start to become apparent and open to examination. When this happens, it is possible to examine them, use others as spotlights, and decide to confirm beliefs or begin to change them. I have had students who feel this is too "personal" and should not be part of an "academic" course. It is sometimes very difficult to demonstrate that embodied theory *is* the course. For example, a person's story about being forced to eat peas as a child may embody her theory that children should be forced to eat what is good for them or that children should never be forced to eat what is good for them or that sometimes there are occasions when children should be forced to eat what is good for them. Many other theories are implied in each

of those statements - from the importance of attachment and how to build it between children and adults, to how best to prepare a child to resist the advances of a child molester.

Another benefit of this approach is the training of a habit of seeing beyond the particular to its larger meaning - how it fits into the overall scheme of things. This seems like a useful habit to foster....most students see one or two issues in a case, but it's rare to find anyone who can see a variety of issues / principles in one situation. (Journal, November 12, 1994)

My next entry in 1994 reminded me that it does take some students longer than others to really get going. It seems that once they can connect a case we have seen or read to something in their personal experience, then the discussion really captures their interest. This entry also reminded me that it is often the discussions that occur *outside* of class that contribute as much to a student's understanding of child development as the official in-class ones.

One group not communicating in the time I've allotted for small group discussion: one student was busy writing in her journal; others were discussing the article in very general terms. Right before I was going to intervene, the discussion evolved to their *own* stories and a real discussion got going!

One student mentioned that the case of *Lisa, Angry Already* (Brazelton and Cramer, 1990) sparked discussion for three or four weeks after class, rather than just the one-week we addressed it in class. (Journal, November 14, 1994)

The next entry reminded me that sometimes a personal story of teaching shared with a class is another type of "case" that can be a good motivator for thinking about one's own practice. The entry also reflects my on-going struggle to facilitate a case without co-opting it. Others' stories remind me so often of my own stories and it is very hard to resist the urge to take up the lion's share of the talking time with the stories I love to tell. Perhaps some of them might be helpful to some students in some ways, but not as much as the telling of their own stories. I have come to realize that the main purpose of my stories, or the cases I present, is to begin discussion of the students' own stories - for that is where their theories lie.

Used one real-life teacher's story as a case. Excellent discussion about teacher responsibility. Students brought out the spectrum of responses similar to what I would have done in a "lecture." I think I would (in hindsight) include whole group discussion in the middle to highlight all

the concepts, as not every group of three hit on the same points. Certainly feels like this method engages student interest - and minds....

...I still find myself inserting my own opinions and stories too much. I'm most pleased with myself when I'm able to just insert questions to guide discussion and summarize with a view to clarifying the issues and only occasionally interjecting. So hard to remember that learning comes from examining one's *own* stories. I'm not the only learner in this group. My "airtime" needs limiting too. (Journal, November 28, 1994)

It surprises me now, in 1998, to read about my struggles three years ago to figure out the process of case-based discussion and to limit my "expert" stance, especially when the discussion heats up and I think the group is way off base. This next journal entry is typical as it describes how I have always taught. When anyone said something truly, outlandish (for example, "children are born bad"), I would immediately launch into what the research said on the subject. I thought that sharing this information would change the way students thought about children. If only it were that easy!

Goofed again. We viewed a video case and had small group discussion. Then I got one-track minded, thinking I wouldn't get through everything and overlooked the possibility of whole class discussion of the issues, so that we could bring out points perhaps overlooked by some groups.

One student brought up a good question in her small group about "kids bad from birth." We could have brought it for discussion to the whole class. Instead, I couldn't resist sharing my viewpoint. Missed a good opportunity for group discussion, review, probing. So difficult to resist being "the expert," even though I know this isn't the best approach to getting students to think. I'm hoping if I keep writing about this "bad habit," I'll start to become more conscious of it and stop myself. (Journal, November 30, 1994)

In November, 1995, I reflect on a university studies education course where I seem to realize the value of using a related case that can draw out the discussion from the chapter in the child development text assigned for that week. Oddly enough, what seems so obvious in 1998 was something I had to think through step-by-step back then.

Education class last night - not as satisfying a class for me as it usually is. Reasons:

1) I talked too much - took time to "cover" some terms - could have been done with student involvement - bugs me because I know students don't learn by just listening to me.

2) no clearly defined case - I showed and discussed a case but I missed the sharing / digging / questions-to-think-about step. Perhaps a case each week to relate to the up-coming reading. Such an obvious

connection, but I haven't clearly made it until just now - bless you journal!

I look back and see myself "honing in" on this approach, but not clearly articulated until just now - would provide a much more cohesive framework for reading and discussion. Still have three more chances left before class ends. (Journal, November 3, 1995)

In November, 1996, one articulate group of second year diploma students, who have had considerable experience running programs for children, clearly reminded me of the importance of personal stories over ones I planned to present.

Their concern seemed to be that although my "cases" were interesting, they're at the end of their program and want to talk more about the ethical issues they handle daily, and discuss issues arising from the advocacy projects they're doing that are "dear to their hearts." I'd just been reading Ira Shor's *Empowering Education* (1992), and it's amazing - they're saying exactly what he's saying. They'd like resources and cases to supplement the topics they come up with and they have plenty because they're out there working with kids, families and the community.

Where was my head!? This was the discussion we needed, in the first class, to give us direction and even though it's what I meant to do, somehow I got side-lined. When *will* I figure this out! So the rest of the class was spent in small groups discussing "hot topics" (ethical issues they're currently handling) and project concerns.

An obvious difference emerges, that I forgot to appreciate, between certificate and diploma students: *certificate* students need cases to jump-start their own reflections on experiences [with children]; *diploma* students, on the other hand, have a wealth of experience and need little prompting. They have tons to talk about and need time in class to do that. (I fell into the same rut as some of the professors I find frustrating, that is, forgetting to honor what students know and what they articulate that they need.) (Journal, November 6, 1996)

Students, who are experienced teachers of children, have a wealth of knowledge about programs and families accumulated over the years. Formal study can provide a framework for each to examine her own practice in order to truly understand what she is doing (not unlike what I am attempting in my own study). Teachers generally lead hectic lives, so time for study is, for many, an oasis - a luxury - a time for the reflection and discussion with other professionals that just is not possible in the heat of daily teaching. Ira Shor (1992) describes this process, that I am still struggling to facilitate, when he says:

When students take a "case," make personal connections, and then share those, they develop a "collective text....new knowledge created in critical

discourse....gaining critical knowledge of their unexamined experience" that allows students to summarize the meaning of their experiences (p. 122).

December marks the end of first term at our college. Courses finish in preparation for new ones to begin in January. December marks for me the end of the first half of my learning cycle - a looking back over the previous four months to see what worked well and what needs changing before I make a new start in the coming year. In December, 1994, my biggest concern, "covering the curriculum," and how personal stories and cases mesh with what so many experts have designated in textbooks, as content to be covered in child development, is apparent in the following journal entry. This is a real dilemma for me as a college instructor. There is a provincial curriculum for all our early childhood development courses, agreed upon and formalized between all the colleges in Alberta with ECD programs. This ensures that any student can transfer to any ECD program in the province and be accepted without penalty. My courses in child development have been reviewed by the universities, as well, for transferability into university studies. My biggest challenge is addressing this agreed upon curriculum while at the same time ensuring that I help students learn what they need to know about children, by weaving the personal and the curriculum in a meaningful pattern.

...written feedback from final education class very positive to case approach. I expected some "down" aspects and was surprised that all comments were positive."Cases" were a combination of personal stories, video incidents (current events), written cases from various books ...I had hoped to incorporate cases from teachers in local schools....I felt circumscribed by the information I feel I need to cover in a course called Child Development. It's a basic course for most students and I feel they need to come in contact with some basic understandings [theories] of child development. I think the case approach works well. I certainly enjoyed the challenge, but I did tailor the choice of cases to the topics addressed in the child development text.

...One student had a brother who did this course with me last year (the old way), and another student was enrolled last year and dropped out part way through. They each have a unique perspective as the only two who know how different this method is from what I did last year. As a mature student, the one who compared notes with her brother was concerned about learning as much as her brother did. Interestingly, she felt she had. The student who dropped out last time finished the course and told me that the case-based approach kept her interested. (Journal, December 3, 1994)

The following year, in December 1995, my thoughts were largely focused on how best to conduct case studies: when to provide reflective writing time, when to initiate discussion. My next journal entry suggests a beginning awareness of explaining my use of cases as I am experimenting with them. As I explain my use of cases, there is a note of consulting the learner, a small awareness of shifting authority:

...need to ask "what's happening here?" to check and see if they understand what I'm trying to do - is it helpful? Forgot to leave a quiet space right after the article reading to allow students to jot down their own thoughts before discussion. Some students did this on their own, but I didn't pick up on it.....need to discuss with students the purpose of the specific cases I choose. One of the main purposes (other than identifying and exploring issues) is to challenge flexibility of thinking - consider other points of view - feel your own [opinion] shift a little or at least begin to question your beliefs [or strengthen them]. As an example, I used my own opinion on "retention in kindergarten" and talked about the differences between commonsense opinions and informed ones. If there isn't some shifting of views (new perspectives), if not *some* eye-openers, why take the course? (Journal, December 2, 1995)

I seem to have shifted a bit myself - away from a narrow focus on covering the textbook, toward more focusing on how students think about the major concepts in the field of child development.

Conferenced with education students and held a whole group brainstorming with child development students. I was so pleased with overall enjoyment students expressed for those courses - strong support for case method and journals. Mostly spontaneous comments saying how much they enjoyed coming to class - how it got them to think - see things differently - interact with peers - "learned a lot." (Journal, December 15, 1995)

Thoughts from my professional reading again surface in my journal and help bolster my confidence that textbooks can be viewed as references, rather than as something to be memorized. Case-based instruction was a way for me to break out of the "expert-lecture" mode and begin to see us all as learners constructing our knowledge of child development together. By the end of 1995, I was beginning to see that cases were not so much an end in themselves as a means to articulate thinking and promote reflection. Reading Foster (1994) helped me to clarify my thoughts on case-based instruction and how it was shifting how I saw myself as teacher, as expressed in the next journal entry:

- 1) case study as a method that promotes thinking
- 2) case study as a way to shift teacher role to facilitator - encouraging thinking, questioning
- 3) role of teacher needs to shift because of what we know of how people learn. Constructing one's knowledge needs time to "play around" - articulate - hear others' responses - measure own thinking against questions and comments to either strengthen concepts or re-align, adjust, or abandon them. Perhaps one piece of my exploration needs to be concerned with how knowledge is constructed. (Journal, December 15, 1995)

By December of the following year, 1996, I was much more in tune with students' responses as I had begun to use after/class response groups on a regular basis. Our ongoing discussions made me realize how much case-based instruction emotionally colors the principles it addresses. So many of the televised documentaries that illustrate the importance of working with children and understanding their development can be fairly traumatic in nature. In the next journal entry, students remind me that their effects can sometimes become a bit overwhelming:

The after/class group for Child Development met and said that they felt that this class was much more "uplifting" than some of the ones we've recently had. The topics weren't so depressing...So we discussed the need to keep a balance - end on a happy note. One student mentioned that whatever we discuss stays with her for the rest of the day and influences how she feels about things. So I'll need to be aware not only of the principles a video case portrays, but also the "affect" - how it emotionally affects the students - and how to put a spin on issues that provides strength and encouragement, rather than discouragement. (Journal, December 6, 1996)

While I was busy figuring out how best to use case-based instruction and to incorporate the powerful personal stories it led to, the process was changing me as a teacher in ways I was not aware of until I stopped and looked back.

I started all this thesis process with a fascination with cases as a more effective way to teach. And as much as I continue to use cases, try new things with them, keep my fascination with theory as it is embedded in practical situations, I have to acknowledge that the bigger part of this research is the transformative quality. I see students differently. I understand my place in the classroom differently. (Journal, December 13, 1996)

January marks the beginning of the second term at our college, when I often have the same students again and, because of the small class sizes, we usually know each other quite well. As I read through my January entries from the previous years, I notice that by 1996 I seem to have a much clearer idea of how I want to engage in case-based discussions. I seem especially concerned with trying to talk less in order to allow more time for my students to articulate and to think more. These journal entries are a good reminder to me of how much of what I now do automatically was deliberately thought out, step by step, over the past few years, as expressed in this 1996 entry:

As I'm starting to write my thesis proposal, I've decided to re-read my journals to date. I'm amazed at what's changed and what hasn't. I seem to have less need to "cover" the material - know what everyone's doing and thinking - and have more trust in the process. I seem to find it easier to focus on issues rather than getting swallowed up in battling opinions. There seems to be a growing awareness of removing myself as the "expert," as the centre of the action to whom students address their comments and the one who responds to those comments.

Still do too much talking and not enough facilitating. I need to structure whole class discussion so that individuals *respond to each other, rather than to me*. I've begun to describe myself as the "taker of notes" and keep my contribution until the end of the discussion time. Odd. I didn't think this clearly about what I might try next until I wrote it out just now. I'm anxious to try this new shift as a possible way to keep students thinking and reduce my presence front and centre. They'll think more - and I'll learn more - why didn't I think of this sooner? It'll be a really fun experiment:

1. view / read case
2. written reflection
3. small group discussion
4. whole class discussion - (I'll take notes)
5. I'll summarize issues & ask any "leading questions" or make comments at the end. (Journal, January 3, 1996)

This five-point format has become the typical way I approach a case with first year students. The only difference that I have recently noted is the need to be flexible depending on the class and on the case. Students recently have encouraged me to become more a part of the case discussion, rather than waiting until the end. I am trying this in a very gentle fashion to avoid becoming the focal point of discussions. The next journal excerpt, from 1996, contains the first steps toward what I often do now, that is, allow considerable class time for project work.

Why do we think teaching means a large bunch of people gathering in one room with an instructor to go through a textbook? Might some other approaches be as valid? Need to re-think the child development course. We could meet for cases / speakers / student presentation of text material, but allow the rest of time for students to do group and individual work... accept chaotic nature of learning. Let students "play" with ideas. Let underlying learning patterns emerge, however they will, as long as student is engaged. (Journal, January 9, 1996)

As I re-view videotapes of myself teaching, the differences from year to year are a lot more evident than they were from class to class. In January, 1996, I comment on a video of myself teaching from the previous fall and note many of the habits I have worked so hard to change over the past three years. I chuckle now at the tone of these entries. Obviously I thought this would be a much quicker, simpler process than it has proven to be:

Students still directing all comments to me rather than to each other. I need to allow more pauses and get over the feeling that I need to jump in to keep things moving. I need to try to take notes so that I can look down and allow students to address each other. I'm still doing most of the talking. If I want them to really examine / express what they think, I'll need to stop throwing out questions that direct the discussion, and save them until the end, after they've explored *their* ideas.

Second case: I'm still asking the questions and making many of the points - too directive. This is the second year I've been at this. How long it takes to switch from "teacher" role to "head learner" role! I need to constantly remind myself about how people learn. They construct knowledge rather than listen and learn.

Third case: Still too much directing / talking / answering my own questions. I'm certainly thinking, but how much am I helping the students to think? Darn. I'll need to watch videos right when they're taken in order to improve practice. (Journal, January 1, 1996)

In January, 1998, I had a reduced courseload in order to work on my thesis. I was teaching a group of experienced early childhood students who were very busy running programs for children, while they were studying for their ECD diplomas. I chose one text for the course (Gonzalez-Mena, 1998) because it had thoughtful readings, but especially as it had the very questions, at the end of each reading, that I wanted to pose to get students thinking and writing about their own experiences. Personal stories and cases have now become synonymous:

Finished reading - over vacation - a textbook by Janet Gonzalez-Mena (1998). I'm so impressed by the way it isn't a textbook. All the major

thoughts that I'd like returning ECD students to think about are in there - in a very user-friendly way. Especially that critical item of examining one's own childhood and biases and understanding why we each react in certain ways in particular situations. How understanding the importance of our own childhood is necessary in order to understand how important what we do with children is to them - for their childhood and in the long haul - for their adulthood.

I can remember too clearly the students I've had who haven't wanted to acknowledge this and I now watch them professionally making things tough for those under their supervision. I think they would be much more effective if they had examined their early years and their motivations - but I wasn't sure enough of myself and when they stated firmly that they refused to explore their childhoods, I accepted their reluctance. Now, I feel confident enough to make this personal reflection a requirement of passing the course - it's just too important to ignore - and the good of young children is at stake. (Journal, January 7, 1998)

In the next January, 1998 entry, a conversation with a student in my diploma classes reminded me that students, with a lot of experience with children, need a place to examine what they are currently doing and that these experiences provide the class with a wealth of first hand "cases":

S. says that she wants to learn something new, not just review what she already knows. I explained that I would be trying to be more of a facilitator, rather than just sharing information with them and that discussion would be our focus. She replied that it was really at the times when the class had discussion that she felt like she was really learning something. I suggested that we check each class on this to make sure meaningful discussions were happening and to please speak up and say something if we lapse into "reruns." ...Reminds me to work again from cases to theory - from the specific to the general - only now the "cases" will be, even more, the events of their lives with children. (Journal, January 21, 1998).

I think that cases are good for the beginning student - as discussion starters - as ways to "jump-start" the childhood memories that leads to an awareness of how they react to children and why. This articulation often expresses a student's beginning philosophy of teaching, formed by those experiences. Once articulated, this understanding of children can be changed - or confirmed. For students already working with children, however, jump-starting is rarely needed, as they daily face the children who push their buttons. They come *needing* to articulate - analyze - confirm or change. This seems to be a strong motivator for most of them to reconsider their own childhoods. It is a powerful

way to gain insight on how the way one acts as an adult has its roots in how one was treated as a child.

As I review my entries for **February**, 1995, I am again reminded of how hard it is for me to break the "expert" habit, that is, talking too much. When using case-based instruction was a brand new idea for me, it was very helpful to read Wasserman (1993, 1994) and others who were using cases in teacher education. Strictly speaking, cases, in education, seem to be chosen and directed by the teacher as a means to cover a pre-determined curriculum. However, my understanding of case-based instruction seems to have changed quite dramatically over the four years that I have been writing in this journal. For me, case-based instruction has been more of a catalyst in my understanding of how people learn to work with children, and has helped me appreciate the importance of students' own stories as "cases."

In 1995, I was struggling with the mechanics of a new approach, not yet aware that this was only the beginning of a long search for understanding what educating teachers really means.

Started reading Selma Wasserman's (1994) *Introduction to Case Method Teaching: A Guide to the Galaxy* - the book I'm beginning to wish I'd written. A startling reminder of what case study can be - and how far I've strayed from my original intent. I'm amazed at how easy it is to fall back into old habits - start doing the talking (and the thinking) for the group - so much easier to just tell them what to think! Reading this and having one student come today to say that the first semester of child development was more interesting and now it's more boring, jolted me into realizing I'm not using case study as effectively as I did in the first semester.

...Reflecting back on the last class on attachment. The cases caught their interest, but I could have allowed much more time for discussion and asked the thinking questions, rather than take up time with my opinions - ouch! I should know better by now. Not enough small group discussion and letting a few verbal students take over the whole group discussion (that includes me) while others assume a passive role. Why do I assume the quiet ones have nothing to say! (Journal, February 16, 1995)

I am more aware now of how much influence our own childhoods and experiences of schooling have on the way we interact with children and the way we run our programs. Cases are often a very effective means to open the door to our own stories, but they are not the end in themselves. I am convinced, as I watch my graduates year after year, that

the education of teachers needs to be more concerned with helping them understand what *they* do and why they do it, than with having them learn what other people do. In my next February, 1995 entry, however, I still seem to be concerned with what *I* am supposed to be doing:

Still asking lots of direct questions - the discussion is really led by me and directed by me. I summarize points as we go along and move us on to the next point. There's nothing wrong with this necessarily. It's what most teachers tend to do so there's probably something to it. Certainly we all seem to feel comfortable with it. It strikes me that it's very *content*-oriented and in teacher education I'm feeling more and more strongly that it's not so much the content (although that's a solid jumping off point) but the way new information is connected to experiences and thinking, that's important.

I just know I can't do it this way any more - that is, the teacher directed discussion. I'm stuck in the place that feels like the *more* I talk, the clearer *my* thinking gets, and the less chance there is for anyone else to do the thinking *they* need to do.

I notice that in order to summarize the main points being made, I have to interrupt certain students in order to keep the discussion "organized" and to the point - and I suppose to make sure that I'm the one in charge! I think this was me trying to be Selma Wasserman (although she probably wouldn't recognize herself)! (Journal, February 16, 1995)

At this point, in 1995, I seemed to be trying to move from what Wasserman and other teacher educators recommended as a case-based approach - one where the content is predetermined - to an approach that listened more to student voice, and to what students thought was important for them to think about. This is a major leap of faith for a teacher, made more possible for me because of all the thinking I was doing in 1995 about how I best learned as a graduate student and how that translated into what I did as a teacher and what I understood about how people learn.

Last February, 1997, as I reviewed a videotape of myself using cases in 1995, I seem to have begun to see how cases might be used differently in teacher education and how important student voice could be in the process:

Wasserman's (1993, 1994) approach to case-based learning - that of preparing the key points ahead in order to pull the discussion back to the content - helps explain all the interrupting and summarizing I did in my 1995 video. It was a good exercise, and connects to what's done in business training, but no longer connects with how I think students best learn about who they will be with children. It seems that Wasserman helped me "de-center" - get away from what *I* plan to say and concentrate more on what the *students* are saying. I can't believe that there was a

time that I didn't really hear what some students were saying because I was thinking so hard about what I was going to say next! Yet I can remember just going "um-mm" because I had no idea what had been said. (Journal, February 20, 1997)

The last sentence in this journal is such a telling one for me: "Yet I can remember just going 'um-mm' because I had no idea what had been said." Now, in 1998, I cannot imagine *not* hearing what a student said, and *not* asking her to repeat it if I did not understand! That sentence indicates for me how much I must have been focused on what I wanted to say and how little I must have credited what students needed to say.

By February, 1998, cases were simply jumping off places for our own stories of being with children. I was trying study groups with the ECD diploma students. On the weeks that we did not have classes, groups of three or four students met and shared their stories of practice in their centres. I learned about them second-hand through the reflections that appeared in their journals and in references brought up in class discussion. These students, all teachers running programs for children, said they enjoyed the groups immensely and found their discussions supportive of the work they did with children and with their assignments.

In the next section, I reflect on my re-reading of all my **March** journals, from 1995 to the present. In March, 1995, I was reading Selma Wasserman (1993, 1994) on facilitating case discussions, and saw myself as very much the authority in the classroom. I felt it was up to me to decide what topics would be discussed, how long a person could speak, and how to keep the group "on topic." Her suggestions, however, did make me more aware of the need to reduce my voice in the classroom and allow more space for student voice as we worked together on cases, orchestrated by me:

One point Wasserman (1993, 1994) makes is to take the time to prepare questions and comments before class it's hard to get a new perspective - thinking ahead of time of key questions/comments that will pull a group back in if the discussion strays too far - anticipating some off-shoot possibilities and how they relate to the topic at hand - making sure that the main points of theory get somehow addressed. (Journal, March 7 1995)

As I watch myself on videotape in March, 1995, facilitating a case and trying to put Wasserman's ideas into practice, I seem to be more aware of how often I tell students what to think rather than comment in a way that motivates them to think. My next

journal entry assumes that the case is very much the "container" of curriculum content and we, as teacher and students, are looking for meaningful ways to open it together.

After reading Wasserman (1993, 1994) I notice I need to follow up more on individual student comments rather than following just my agenda. Have started to sum up what I hear students saying. Need to reflect thoughts back to students more. Still throw in my little speeches - need to keep them shorter...I still answer questions - my own and others. I need to keep asking and summing up rather than telling them what to think...Still need to interrupt if someone rambles - try summing up what that person said so far and move on to next person.

I'm making many of the connections to the principles in the text. I need to wait and question to let them make the connections. I miss lots of opportunity to follow up on what students say - acknowledge that I heard what they said by summarizing. It's tricky to take what's said and relate it to the principles we're reading about. I need to say what I've heard so that students hear their thoughts coming back. (Journal, March 10, 1995)

In the next journal entry that same month, I am still concentrating on how better to prepare case discussions ahead of time so that the students will "cover" all the points that I think are important. In this entry, I refer to my summer course with Jean, with a passing inkling that perhaps there may be an even more effective way to "be" as a teacher in a classroom with students. I wonder, in this excerpt, how Jean ran our graduate seminars to make them so effective, without yet realizing how that would become a powerful influence on how I was learning to figure out case-based instruction and sharing authority in the classroom. At this stage, the words I have put in italics were little grains of sand that began to "bother."

...better preparation of case questions would have made more satisfactory connections to readings from course texts. Some informally made, but without better preparation on my part, I don't have a solid feeling that I was able to structure the discussion to review course content....Started to do more with reflecting ideas back to speaker - is this ever difficult! Really requires concentration and attention to what's being said....Felt that I talked too much. I can't resist throwing in anecdotes - trying to keep them short. I noticed this summer that *Jean said very little about her own experiences / opinions*. I suspect it's less intimidating that way and encourages students to speak up more. So hard to bite my tongue, but at least I'm now conscious of doing it more. (Journal, March 15, 1995)

I had not yet begun to figure out what Jean's *pattern* was in doing this - how she build across time to make herself "obsolete" - and how I would like do the same (Pinnegar, 1998, personal communication).

As I experimented with trying to make case-based discussions flow more smoothly and still "cover the curriculum," I grappled with all the minute decisions that this entails - who to allow to speak, how long to allow one person to speak, how to keep the group "on task." I was also showing signs of developing the habit of monitoring my own contributions as carefully as I was monitoring those of the students.

...Still a problem that some students talk more than others - not sure how to handle this without interrupting some more vocal ones. One student, in particular, makes good points, but tends to continue at length. I did notice though that at one point, when I interrupted her to summarize and call on another person, the person [I called on] asked the "talker" if she wanted to continue. So perhaps the group doesn't mind that some students get considerably more "airtime" than others.

Did find I still talk too much - want to throw in my two cents, although I'm thinking more judiciously before I speak. At least now I'm questioning myself to make sure the diversion has a point worth the time I take to make it. I notice that I really need to pay attention to everything that's said. It keeps us on task - addressing the issues - the principles - rather than rambling off topic. (Journal, March 16, 1995)

Experimenting with case-based instruction seemed to serve as a catalyst to help me question my habits of teaching and help me focus more on what students had to say, more on the issues than on differences of opinion. The concentration that this took on my part seemed to serve as a lever to pry me into an awareness of how much I voiced my expert opinion at times when students might better be served by expressing their own thoughts. The following 1995 journal entry was written after viewing a videotaped class discussion from the day before:

Notice students beginning to identify issues - seems more like we're "digging in" with our thinking than just bull-shitting opinions. Not necessary to hash out what's right or wrong. First identify issues - which gets at an ecological approach - what are all the factors affecting this situation - what principles are involved. This seems to shift the discussion from each one's narrow opinion to what are all the principles / perspectives that can influence an opinion. I like it. I'm concentrating more and "spouting the expert line" much less. (Journal, March 17, 1995)

In March 1997, I re-viewed a videotape of a focus group held in May, 1995. Their thoughts on large group discussion were not what I expected. Some said that often students feel freer to express their opinions in a large group where at least some of the participants may agree with them. They also felt that some students are naturally quiet, no matter what size the group. The discussion also reminded me that I need to take time to explain the reasons we use cases and make an effort to link our personal experiences to them. Understanding the theory-practice link and the personal-professional link seems to come with time, discussion and experience.

Was surprised to hear that small groups don't always encourage quieter ones to speak. "If they're quiet, they're quiet," said one student who felt that larger groups actually allow for more difference of opinion....The more we're aware of what we're doing and why, the better for kids. But I can't assume that students will understand or even accept this connection. I need to remember to spend more time on *why* we're doing cases and why we're looking for connections to personal experience and realize that it takes time for people to see the importance of these connections.
(Journal, March 4, 1997)

Although students often ask me in class for my personal opinion on an issue or a case we are analyzing, I have learned to restate what I see as some of the issues and, then, redirect it back to the group. Reviewing this videotape of the 1995 focus group reassured me that refraining from sharing my "expert" comments does help them to think through their own perceptions. The dilemma lies in how to use my expertise wisely, by commenting or posing a question to further thinking, but refraining from telling them what to think. This discussion also sadly reminded me that unexamined opinions do not change:

More interesting comments on when to insert my "expert" opinion. Students ask for it over and over during class. These focus groups seem to be saying that they do *think* more when I reserve my opinion. (It may have to do with taking responsibility for their own learning, rather than abdicating responsibility to the expert.) Also interesting to hear how some people have kept opinions they came into the course with - ones not necessarily helpful for children. When a student advocates punishment, for instance, I wonder if she's missed the whole point of the course. It's almost like some see things in black and white - if understanding and negotiation and conversation don't work right away, then back to punishment - it works. So the difficulty is getting people into the habit of challenging their own assumptions - a good reminder that this doesn't happen automatically - that's it's a difficult habit to

encourage in people who don't come into a course with it already.
(Journal, March 4, 1997)

My next journal comment, after watching that same videotaped focus group, surprised me. It deals with what has often been a concern in the past, the student who talks too much. The more I understand how people learn, the less this concern makes sense to me. A person is talking because it is helping them learn in some way. For me, it is no longer a question of how to shut them up, but more a question of how to allow that need to talk to be exercised in an appropriate way and not interfere with others' learning.

I can't believe I said on this tape that I didn't see any direct relationship between talking and learning. Said in relation to those students who talk "too much" in class. I see this so differently now. Some people talk in order to think. Sometimes it may just be a nervous habit and it is up to the teacher [and the rest of the class] to moderate the discussion so that everyone gets a chance to say what they want to say [that is, express what they think and understand]. Talking too much is no longer an annoyance, but an indication of a need a person has - and then figuring out how best to allow an outlet for that need that respects all the other learners. (Journal, March 4, 1997)

My last journal entry for March, 1997, is an excerpt from my reflections after watching a videotape of a class held two days before. At the end of class, I was surprised by two students who are tremendous talkers, expressing the thought that they talk so much because the other students do not want to. This is a perspective I had never considered that they might hold:

As I watch the video from two days ago, I'm struck by some differences. One is that I kept quiet during the class discussion and only came in at the end when two students seemed to be monopolizing the air time and I wanted to make it a point to say that there is now space for anyone who didn't have a chance yet to add their comments if they'd like. We talked about this in the after/class group as the two talkers were also there. They seem to feel that they talk because the others don't want to.
(Journal, March 8, 1997)

By March, 1997, the nature of cases in case-based instruction has changed considerably for me. Cases include both the documentaries I provide and the personal stories that students share. These are used as starting points for the learning that each of us needs to do. The issues of our teaching that arise become an important part of the curriculum that day. My own learning in this study of case-based instruction has helped me

understand this "path through the curriculum using this method" (Pinnegar, 1998, personal communication).

Rather than seeing cases as examples of particular issues I want to discuss, I'm more apt now to show a case that relates to a previous topic or to one I think might be good to address and then wait and see what comes up. The multiplicity of issues, often different from group to group, usually surprises me. I'm more able to follow what students think is important to talk about and worry less about what I think should be "covered." (Journal March 12, 1997)

This final section is based on re-reading all my journal entries for the month of April, from 1995 to 1998. Most of my references to case-based instruction are found in April, 1995. Since I was just starting to investigate case-based instruction, most of my journal reflections refer to the mechanics of conducting a case:

Notice myself making a greater effort to summarize everyone....I still talk too much - put in what I want them to think (every once in a while) rather than directing the discussion - asking questions. Probably summarize too often - could let discussion run on its own steam more once it gets going - perhaps make notes of main points / principles / issues so I can summarize less frequently but more effectively. (Journal, April 2, 1995)

The following journal excerpt from that same month reminds me again of how much using "cases" in my classes served to decenter me as the "expert" and began to nudge my awareness of how students might learn better by my making thought provoking questions rather than taking the easy route of just telling them what I think and assuming they would automatically adopt my thoughts as their own:

Rather than comment myself - ask the group what *they* think - what are the issues these examples bring up. Two students retold examples of situations with children with special needs. Could have been an impetus for a good discussion - I made a comment and dismissed it as it wasn't on my "agenda." Would have been a good alternative to switch gears - take advantage of topics students bring up and draw out the links between their issues and those on my agenda. This flexibility in thinking and following the discussion flow is one of the characteristics that case-study instructors need to develop. Could try pausing longer for comment - give students a chance to think and respond. Need to get out of "expert" mode and throw questions back to the group. Such a hard habit to break! (Journal, April 9, 1995)

As I watch myself on videotape, facilitating a case discussion, I notice how much of the process takes place between individual students and myself, and I begin to wonder if more student to student interaction would stimulate more thinking. I am still, however, very much the person in control of the process and have not yet begun to question the effectiveness of that.

Getting better at summarizing what's said - and active listening to bring out points. Need to respond to every contribution - even if in the middle of my comments - even if very short - need to draw short commentators out. Need to sit where I can make eye contact with everyone. Still occasional lapses into "speeches" - information that I could have tried to bring out from students. The ball seems to go back and forth from student to me to student to me. Need to try to encourage more student to student interaction. Video is excellent vehicle for noticing who I'm ignoring without realizing it. Still need to work on more graceful interruptions of students. (Journal, April 27, 1995)

As I re-read these early entries on case-based instruction, I am struck by how much experimenting with case-based instruction has served to reveal not only students' preconceptions, but also my own as I examine my teaching in this study. This process is described by Nussbaum and Novick (1982, p.187), as "...the first crucial step in an instructional strategy...making every student aware of his own preconceptions. To achieve this purpose, there is a need for some devised event capable of promoting exposure of preconceptions in all students. In a teacher-guided discussion which should follow such an event, various preconceptions that have surfaced can then be analyzed explicitly and a better self-awareness is likely to ensue." Videodocumentaries seem to have served well as a "devised event" to nudge out preconceptions. For myself, this thesis writing process, this study of the "case" of my own teaching, seems to have been the event that has helped me discover my own preconceptions about how people learn and how I see myself as teacher.

Cases of teachers interacting with children, usually in a video-documentary form, have been very effective in reminding students of their own stories which provide the emotional link to the child development issues that video documentaries present. Nussbaum and Novick (1982, p. 187) go on to characterize cases as "exposing events" selected for their ability to "evoke students' preconceptions in order to understand them." They say that once these preconceptions are presented verbally they confront peers' conceptions. "This confrontation, we believe, introduces the seeds of "conceptual conflict" or "cognitive dissonance" ..." and causes students to continue to wonder

(p. 194). I think cases do serve this purpose more effectively than factual information presented, since good ones engage the emotions as well as the mind. Hearing others' stories and re-examining our old ones is powerful, I suspect, for that same reason. What I had not expected, is that exploring case-based instruction seems to have sowed these same seeds of cognitive dissonance in me. And I too am caused to shift my preconceptions of how students learn - and find myself continuing to wonder.

CHAPTER FOUR

THREAD #2 Shifting Authority in My Classroom **September to April (1994 through 1998)**

Using cases in my classroom, and the personal stories they elicited, seemed to act as a catalyst in helping me think about how people, working with children, improve their skills. That led to a closer examination of how I, as teacher, could best help in that intricate, and still rather mysterious, process. Taking classes with Jean Clandinin at the University of Alberta and trying to figure out what she was doing, that was helping me and others to deeply examine our teaching, was like changing my eyeglass prescription. Everything just seemed to gain a clearer focus.

One **September** 1994 entry, after the Summer Institute with Jean, reflects that the shifting of authority was, ever so slightly, beginning. I can remember being so surprised that when I withheld some of my opinions, my students would often make the same important points I had intended to make. It just generally took a little longer to allow it to happen this way:

...still struggling with role of instructor - when to add my comments - great urge to be the "expert" and mini-lecture as usual. Need to think more about questions to ask to get things going in a fruitful direction when needed. Surprising how often students say what I would have said - the difference being the time lag. I'd say it much sooner, but I'm beginning to appreciate the benefits of the points / ideas coming from the students rather than from me....All students are participating - even the quieter ones...small group discussion started with my suggested topic and then became very personal - reemphasizing for me how we act out of our personal experiences.

How long to let discussions continue is a dilemma. As I listen in, all are following threads / issues important for future teachers to think about. I also think about

- my need to "cover" a certain amount of information in a class
- some groups run down sooner than others
- don't want students to get impression that this is a gab fest - I

know it takes time for students to realize the importance of reflecting on their beliefs using a group sounding board. Took me a while this summer to appreciate its powerfulness. (Journal, September 6, 1994)

Although in 1994 I am beginning to be aware of the need to let students have a chance to talk, I still see myself as "the person with the knowledge" and needing to "cover the

curriculum." My next entry describes one of those times when letting the students talk reveals an underlying "curriculum" of bias in how some non-native students viewed native culture. This was voiced to a native student in the class and came as a shock to me. Without questioning my place in the classroom, I might have gone on talking about poverty as an issue and been completely unaware of this underlying racial bias that could color the way some of my students respond to children and to their families.

Still sorting out my role in this method - how to be most effective. I find that I'm thinking more carefully before I speak - trying hard to frame questions to encourage thinking about issues rather than trying to persuade. How to guide students to see broader perspectives on an issue, rather than just telling them how it is. Find I'm thinking lots more in order to frame questions, act as a resource, limit my "air-time."

Notice that topics emerge in discussion - like the need for aboriginal children to know their cultural identity and why they can't just assume a white culture which is, as one student put it, "just as good as their own." That same non-native student said something to the effect, "Which is better - growing up abused in one's ethnic culture or being adopted by a white stable family and assuming that culture?" I think the biases we uncover now, and air, are important to the teaching these students will be doing.

I asked students at the beginning of class how journals were going - positive response. In one student's words: "Other classes are set up where you listen and the instructor talks and it's frustrating to want to say, 'Look, I have my own opinion and I disagree with something you said.'" I think the journal provides a good outlet for that. (Journal, September 7, 1994)

It was interesting to hear students compare my new approach with that taken in some of their other classes. The following entry describes an insight that took me quite by surprise. I have a great deal of respect for my fellow instructors. We work closely together and share a strong professional commitment to helping people work well with children. However, I began to see their "expert" stances as discordant, whereas I had been comfortable with this approach for years.

...I watched my fellow instructors in seminar this afternoon teaching the way I used to and realized that I can no longer do it that way. As I watch student response, I can now see that our "lecturing," however entertaining, doesn't necessarily change thinking. Students need to express their own thoughts - bounce them off peers - get them out and examine them in order to really *think*. It's amazing how clearly I can see this now. (Journal, September 16, 1994)

J.'s brother S. took Ed Psy last year from me when I used a different approach: reading the whole book and weekly quizzes. As she compares what we're now doing with his experience, he says that the approach in his class really "covered the material." My question now is: Does covering the material effectively prepare teachers? (Journal, September 19, 1994)

All these entries at the beginning of term in 1994 indicate a budding understanding of the strong link between being the "expert" in the classroom and "covering the curriculum" as understood to be set by other "experts." By September of 1995, I seem to be rather laboriously shifting from someone who shares expert opinion to someone who is trying hard *not* to share information, but to pose questions, or comments in a way that allows students to think through their own answers.

...find that it's becoming more automatic - this reflecting what a student has said, clarifying the issues, presenting my thoughts in a question or issue format rather than dogmatically as "the answer." (Journal, September 7, 1995)

Pleased that a former student is back for my Ed Psy course. Her wide experience with special needs will be a wonderful addition to the class. Already I see her posing questions within her small group to get people thinking - to see how others think, rather than imposing her much better informed views. I'm impressed by the level of thought even from the young ones - looking beyond the behavior to influences on behavior. (Journal, September 8, 1995)

By limiting my own voice and allowing more space for student voices, it seems that I am realizing how helpful that is in allowing students to learn from one another. After all, there is only so much time in a classroom hour, so the question emerges, "If I'm not talking, what else then is allowed to happen? Is that as meaningful as what I felt needed to be told?"

... I'm still talking too much. Need to get back on track - reflective listening - frame my points as questions rather than as "pronouncements." I've been listing issues on the board as reminders for topics that can be written about in journals - is this a good idea? Need to remember to check at end / beginning of each class for feedback on how it's going. (Journal, September 14, 1995)

I notice that in 1995 I remind myself to check for student feedback, but have not yet figured out a consistent way to do that. Although my intentions were good, I rarely

remembered or found the time until I read Ira Shor (1992) who talked about the importance of establishing a consistent way to check regularly with students by using such things as "after class groups" at the end of each class.

About this time, I sat in on a course at university that was in my area of specialty and one I thought might be quite interesting to take, as it was in the evening and attracted a number of practicing professionals. However, as my place was shifting in the classroom, I found I was becoming less and less patient as a student myself in classrooms still firmly planted in lecture-expert formats. The following journal entry describes my reaction to the first meeting of that seminar:

Rather than lecture - notes - exams, how much more *powerful* this course would be with specific cases of children, discussed with background readings and all the expertise that this particular group of practicing professionals could bring to it. (Journal, September 14, 1995)

I decided not to take this course, as it was evident from the first class that the instructor was not open to suggestions from graduate students about how they would like to learn. I remember how gut-wrenching it felt to be questioning my own teaching in thesis work and struggling to give my students a voice in the process and, at the same time, being in classes where the modeling went contrary to all I was attempting to do and to the latest research on how people learn. This seemed particularly unacceptable in graduate classes preparing teacher educators. As I write this in 1998, I find that Richardson (1996) seems to reflect my developing understanding when she says:

Conceptions of the education of students in elementary, middle, and secondary schools have been undergoing a profound paradigmatic change. These conceptions affect expectations, curriculum, instruction, and assessment. No longer do we identify skills in a particular subject-matter area that teachers transmit to students in a lock-step manner. Instead, students are viewed as active 'makers of meaning' whose background understandings strongly affect the way in which they process and make sense of new knowledge. These constructivist conceptions are apparent in the newly developed national standards (e.g. National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1989), and in assessment instruments developed at the state and national levels.

Teacher education has also been undergoing paradigmatic changes, although these changes seem to follow rather than precede changes in elementary and secondary education. (my italics) (p. 263).

I am becoming more convinced that one of the most powerful ways we prepare future teachers is through the modeling we do as teachers everyday in our college and university classrooms. *How* we help our students learn may carry the most convincing message of how we think they, in turn, can help their students learn. Fortunately, for me, many of my graduate level courses introduced me to wonderful writer-teachers who questioned their own teaching and improved it, while providing a thoughtful model for my own teaching.

Some of the good models that influenced this sense of shifting authority for me in the classroom came from personal experiences thoughtfully explored in my professional readings, by writers that gently nudged my own thinking about my teaching. Judith Newman (1992) was one of these who explored one course she taught in great detail, interweaving her own thoughts with those of her students. Her approach reassured me that when authority shifts, it gets messy. I do not have all the control. I have to think more about what I am doing - no automatic pilot days allowed. She reminded me of a touchstone I had forgotten:

Helpful hint from Newman in *Interwoven Conversations: Learning and Teaching Through Critical Reflection* (1992, p. 22). She talks about three questions from Don Graves that helped her:

- what's the one thing I want teachers to understand?
- why do I think it's important?
- how might I help them *experience* it? (my italics)

(Journal, September 20, 1995)

Helping students "experience it" reminded me so clearly of my own early childhood training with Graves. I had experienced it from a student's point of view, but had not truly thought of it from an instructor's point of view, until I read Newman. It was another validation for me of the shift from "telling them," to finding ways to encourage students to think about, and emotionally connect with, basic principles of good teaching.

As I review the cycle of Septembers, the beginnings of each new school year, I notice a gradual shifting in how I viewed myself as teacher. In September of 1994, I knew that I needed to change my "expert" stance in the classroom, but I was not quite sure what to replace it with. By the following September 1995, my experiences as a graduate student myself - one who was studying the process of teaching - was becoming a powerful sensitizer to my own students' experiences with my teaching. My journal entries seem to reflect an increasing willingness to pay attention to what students have to say.

As I began the fall term journal in September, 1997, I seem much more relaxed and confident in what I was doing with students. All my thesis work - the reading, writing, journal analysis, university classes, paying attention to student feedback, shifting my authority, discussion with colleagues, attending conferences - seemed to reach a point where I wanted to try something very different from what we had been doing in our teacher education program in the past. I wanted to teach from the students' points of view and respond to the question, "What would be most helpful, from a student's point of view, in getting prepared to teach children?" The following journal entry begins to describe this process.

...most important for me - and I'll keep reminding myself of this - this journal writing is to help me figure out my teaching as I'm doing it. Last year was truly a wonderful year - I enjoyed my teaching so much - and I know from all the years I've been at this, that it's a direct result of my thesis work. Trying some daring stuff this fall - hope I don't fall flat on my face.

I've decided to try to approach this more from the students' points of view. Rather than having four instructors with four sets of texts and readings and four assignment expectations, the students will have one main instructor (me) coordinating assignments and classes.

I'm going to try "chunking" our reading assignments. We'll start off September by concentrating on one text - *Creative Curriculum* - which gives an overview of the field and has consistently been rated highly by students. This, and my *Newsweek* issue on babies, will serve as an introduction to child development. I'll emphasize being with children and drawing our discussion materials and journal writing from our experiences before placing anyone in formal practicum. We'll arrange a variety of playgroup situations, including some with their own children, I hope.

Every year we lose some very good students in the beginning of the year due to a sense, I think, of overwhelming stress. In effect, we almost weed out the most conscientious students (who feel they can't do everything that's expected) while some who slough off and do the minimum possible, stay in!

... It will be time intensive for me, but somehow I can't think of any other way to do it and remain true to the growing I'm doing in terms of how to prepare students to work with children....I think I'll try to read some of Brookfield again - just to remind me to LISTEN TO THE LEARNERS. So easy to forget this as I gallop off in all directions with "content" in sight. (Journal, August 30, 1997)

Rereading the above journal entry, with a 1998 perspective at the end of a successful term, reminds me that what seems so commonsense right now, was a bit of a risky

experiment back in September. For me, it is a good reminder of how much of teaching is risk-taking. I seem to do my best teaching when I deviate from the conventional and let my research and reading inspire new directions. Teaching, like anything else, needs to grow and change with understanding and experience. When I continue with recommended professional reading on teaching, in parallel with the reading I do for the courses I teach, I find it helps me to keep thinking about the process of teaching, as reflected in this next entry:

....I think this thesis process has made me a lot more confident with what I'm trying and a lot more open to questioning and suggestioning. I guess we're all in the process of getting better at what we do, so it's o.k. if I'm not perfect. If people like Brookfield and Paley and Newman are so open with their goofs, why not me?

Brookfield (1996, p.73-74) describes keeping a teaching log and some questions one can ask to try to find patterns / recurring themes in one's teaching:

- 1) What was the moment this week when I felt most connected, engaged, or affirmed as a teacher - when I said, "This is what being a teacher is really all about"?
 - 2) What was the moment this week when I felt most disconnected, disengaged, or bored as a teacher - when I said "I'm just going through the motions here"?
 - 3) What was the situation that caused me the greatest anxiety or distress - "I don't want to go through this again for awhile?"
 - 4) What was the event that took me most by surprise...?
 - 5) Of everything I did this week in my teaching what would I do differently if I had the chance to do it again?
 - 6) What do I feel proudest of in my teaching activities this week? Why?
- (Journal, September 8, 1997)

I have been using these questions in 1997-98 and they seem to get me thinking in directions I had not anticipated. I have also given them to my students and encouraged them to use them as one way to encourage self-reflection in their journals. I notice, in the next section of my journal, that I keep returning more and more to the personal-professional link in my work - the link between teaching and parenting, for myself and for my students. I now encourage them to include their interactions with their own families in their journals. It seems all of a piece - working with one's own children, working with other people's children - one strongly connects to the other. My next entry reflects my growing awareness of the need to explain how I am thinking as I teach:

... Brookfield (1996) says how important it is for teachers to articulate aloud what they're doing and why. Makes me realize that I choreograph our classes with spaces and activities to provoke thinking and I've assumed that's my job as teacher and haven't really thought to explain to students - as I go along - why we're doing something in a particular way. I hope that writing this down will help me remember to keep reflecting aloud.

...If I wasn't reading Brookfield at the moment, I don't think I'd be noticing as much or modeling what I expect students to do and explaining how it helps me. I seem this year to be able to see things more as parts of the whole - as pieces in the preparation of teachers who will be working with young children. With teaching three courses, I'm certainly more aware of how the three distinct courses overlap and complement one another.

Some things are no longer a concern that I think about: talking too much and being the expert no longer seem to plague me. I think I'm much more able to concentrate on what the learner is learning, rather than what I want to teach. I think I do have a much stronger understanding of how to be helpful as the teacher. It's actually a relief not to feel so responsible for making people think a certain way.

I'm always struck by the similarities between teaching and how I interact as a parent: being a consultant - sharing my thoughts - active listening to help my kids figure out things for themselves and trusting their judgment and the process - that they'll get better with practice - that it's an on-going process - understanding doesn't get "poured in" - we all have to work at it - and perhaps the strongest - LISTENING to whatever my children (my students) want to say without their fear of criticism or defensiveness from me. (Journal, September 8, 1997)

Explaining my own thinking during class is one way to provide a good model for students of what is helpful when listening to children and parents. The importance of explaining how articulation helps a person's thinking, rather than just saying, "Everyone's entitled to her own opinion," is becoming more apparent to me:

In 1994 I said, "...it's the habit of reflecting this course needs to encourage rather than the right or wrong answer in any particular situation." Seems like a good hook to hang on to - an easy one to forget. Although I may have mentioned it as a goal of ours in the past, this year it will be one that I keep re-emphasizing in order to free up discussion to be more open. If students can learn to be accepting of one another's articulations as "works in progress," as "what I think at the moment but I may already be changing my mind as I say this," then I think it will be quite helpful for them as they work with children, fellow teachers and especially parents. (Journal, September 8, 1997)

September of each year seems to be a month of getting my feet wet, gradually working into the rapport with students that I am trying to establish. There seems to be a gradual shift in my journal, over the years, away from "my teaching" to paying more attention to the patterns of my students' learning.

I often wondered how teaching adults might be similar to teaching children. This certainly made sense to me in terms of modeling for future teachers the interaction that I would like to see them use with children. It seemed to me that if a teaching principle is sound, then it is likely to be universally sound and appropriate for all ages. I admire the work of Vivian Paley and have read most of her delightful books about preschoolers and teaching. I was so pleased to read her comments on the universality of teaching principles, and the place of the teacher in learning, as articulated in *On Listening To What The Children Say* (Paley, 1986):

When my intention was limited to announcing my own point of view, communication came to a halt. My voice drowned out the children's. However, when they said things that surprised me, exposing ideas I did not imagine they held, my excitement mounted and I could feel myself transcribing their words even as they spoke. I kept the children talking, savoring the uniqueness of responses so singularly different from mine. The rules of teaching had changed; I now wanted to hear the answers I could not myself invent....

My samples of dialogue are from the kindergarten and nursery school, the classes I teach. But the goal is the same, no matter what the age of the student; someone must be there to listen, respond, and add a dab of glue to the important words that burst forth. The key is curiosity, and it is curiosity, not answers, that we model. (my italics) (pp. 124-131).

Paley's emphasis on curiosity is one I want to remember as I become more and more aware of how much my teaching is a model for the teaching my students do in practicum and in their future classrooms. As I review my September journal entries over the years, I sense a shift in trust. I no longer worry about "gab fests." If they occur, I take it as an indicator that the class needs to engage the learner more and I am more likely to consult with the students on what needs changing to make things more interesting. This past September (1997) I seemed to concentrate so hard on understanding the students' perspectives, that "talking too much" and "being the expert" did not surface as an issue.

September seems to be the month of anticipation - the planning of what I would like to accomplish with each new group of students. As we head into October, the drama begins to take its course. My initial thoughts are honed and shaped as they meet up with all the unexpected wants and needs of a diverse set of learners and the process of constructing a curriculum together gets underway in earnest. In this final year of study, I will be trying to remain aware of Paley's notion that it is curiosity, not answers, we model, as I see myself more and more as one of the learners, rather than the "expert" in the room. I will try to be the provider of "glue," that holds the important words of the students, so that they can see the shape of the learning they have created.

During **October** of the first year of this study (1994), I began to discover how my teaching of children and teaching of adults might be linked and it has continued to become clearer. Recently (1997-98), at least for some of the time when I do not forget, I view myself, and act more as, a co-learner with my students. I am as apt to point out times when they have helped me learn and grow professionally as they are to point out what they are learning from me. I like this. I think, as I go through this rather grueling thesis process, that this is what learning is really all about. I might have glibly agreed with this principle earlier on, but these past three years of deepening awareness, observing my colleagues and observing myself on videotape, convinced me that sharing the authority - learning together with students - is a bit like that generally accepted principle of teachers meeting the "individual needs of each student" - a phrase of biblical proportion in education - so often said, so little practiced.

Re-reading my Octobers gives me a sense of my journey. In October, 1994, I began to try out some new ways of acting as a teacher, shifting from the place of resident "expert" in the group to more of a facilitator.

I've noticed that withholding my "lectures" and waiting / guiding student discovery has influenced the way I respond to practicum journals and interact in practicum seminar. I used to respond with my opinion when a student described a situation and wondered if she'd done the "right" thing. Now I'm more apt to say, "Let's bring this up to the group and see what kind of responses we get."

It's a different way of seeing myself as a teacher. I had no difficulty seeing myself as a resource for learners in a child's setting, but I couldn't figure out how that would work in an adult setting. I have an exciting feeling that I may have just found the key! (Journal, October 9, 1994)

A section follows in my 1994 journal discussing student response to an excerpt on "Frederick" from one of Vivian Paley's (1988) books. It describes my surprise that two students, in their small group discussion, criticized how Paley handled this child. I did not say anything, but brought it up in whole group discussion, where most of the students sided with Paley's approach.

...wonder what Paley would say if she were here? Should I "have the last word" or keep biting my tongue? It certainly gives me some insight on how differently very effective teachers interpret child development. I know that the doubters in this class of diploma students are strong thinkers. They won't change their minds just because I say so. Will they alter views or even begin to question, if they hear what others say?....How do you get a strong-minded teacher to examine her experiences and admit that perhaps there were occasions when she could have done things differently? If she doesn't do this in this course, it misses the whole point of the course - does she pass? What kind of grade does that earn? If we're all "works in progress," how do I evaluate this lack of self-reflection... (Journal, October 17, 1994)

As I look at these "non-reflective" students now, in the work they do in children's programs in our community, I think the issue was not only how we trust children (Paley's point), but also how flexible our thinking is. This flexibility of thinking is expressed in how open we are to others' opinions and how willing we are to consider different perspectives. It is an on-going fascination and challenge - how to facilitate large group discussion in a way that frees an individual to examine her own responses and biases. The next journal entry from 1994 suggests that I, too, struggle with "hearing out" very different points of view, and that sometimes just listening allows the speaker to solve her own dilemma.

I feel a lot more comfortable (I just realized this) joining in on small group discussions. I no longer have this big "intrusion" feeling. Maybe they (and I) are getting used to it. The speaker now keeps right on; sometimes doesn't even notice that I'm listening in. Today, I sat in on one group where a student was talking about a little girl in preschool who was hard to control. Another student suggested trying to involve the little girl in play with another child. The first student didn't reply to this, but went on to say that she played with this child for about ten minutes, but was interrupted by other children wanting to play with her and she doesn't feel the little troubled girl should monopolize her time.

I waited and then asked if they saw any connections between what each had said. They didn't see any and soon were off on more complaints about this child. I bit my tongue and waited and waited until I couldn't stand it any longer. Just as I was about to verbalize that it was

a perfect opportunity to invite the newcomer to play with her *and* the troubled girl, another student spoke up and *said it exactly*. Well, even better, because she added the respectful note that she'd suggest asking the troubled little girl first if she would like the newcomer to join in the play.

It's so hard to bite my tongue after years of letting it loose, but it's worth the wait when insight comes from the students themselves. I notice that they pay careful attention to one another. They may also be more likely to follow up on how things are working out if they were the ones to suggest a strategy. (Journal, October 21, 1994)

It surprises me, as I reread these 1994 entries, how difficult it was for me not to be the expert on every occasion. I find I am much more inclined now to be more interested in what students are thinking than in what I have to say.

In October, 1995, I was taking graduate courses and doing all kinds of inspiring reading under the guidance of some dynamic women at the University of Alberta. My own experiences as a graduate student returning to the classroom - being both a teacher and a student - was a powerful counterpoint for me. This duality forced me to consider whether I was as considerate of my students as I expected my graduate studies professors to be of me. As I explored the nature of teaching and learning, I found it to be a wonderfully sensitizing, at times rather uncomfortable, experience.

... "the need to know is what drives genuine learning" (Newman, 1992, p. 255). I have to keep reminding myself I need to let go enough so learners can show me what they need to know... She cites Malcolm Knowles as saying: "The truly artistic teacher... perceives the focus of responsibility for learning to be in the learner; he conscientiously suppresses his own compulsion to teach what he knows his students ought to learn in favor of helping his students learn for themselves what they want to learn."

I know that's true for myself. I learn best in classes that allow me to do this, while still providing a framework / readings / discussion format that prods my thinking process - I like having choices. I don't think this is just at the graduate level, once we know "a lot." Seems like a learning principle that's true for adults and for preschoolers and for all the ages in between. (Journal, October 3, 1995)

Two days later, my journal reflects the importance of continuing to read other teachers' descriptions of their teaching, in order to challenge my own perspectives. By writing in detail about her teaching and the way she thinks about what she is doing, Newman (1992) helps me think about the importance of keeping a journal, for myself as well as for my students, and even about sharing sections of my writing with my students. I now

xerox sections of my journal, from time to time, to share with my students, and have been quite surprised by how powerful this sharing can be. The next journal entry reflects on the inspiration Newman (1992) provides in this regard:

Writing as conversations - I need to remember this in responding to students' journals. Giving "movies of my mind" to let the writer know how writing is affecting me.... "writing finds its own meaning" (p. 316). She did her own writing to keep in tune with what students are struggling with and sometimes xeroxed a page from her journal for each student. Wonder if I should try doing some responding to the child development text as I read and sharing some of it?... "find out first hand how writing, itself, teaches" (p. 317). Newman consistently encourages students to make connections between what they're doing in class and what they do with children - a good reminder for me to keep doing that too. "What's happening here?" - a good comment to remember to use - Newman uses it consistently. (Journal, October 5, 1995)

I still continue to be impressed with how much the physical act of writing helps me think new thoughts I had not been consciously aware of before writing them down. I also try to remember to use her phrase "What's happening here?" to remind myself to examine what learning is actually occurring and to remind me of the teaching model I provide. It is so easy to forget that this modeling may be the most powerful message I send in my courses. As I think back now, to my graduate courses two years ago, what I remember most is not the content as much as the way in which the professor addressed the content and related to us as students. That was the most powerful long-term lesson of their courses for me and one that is so easy to forget when I get all wrapped up in the ideas I want to share.

As a graduate student in 1995, a comment from a fellow student was very helpful in reminding me how much language can subtly reflect what a person really thinks. Evidently, "shifting authority" needs time to filter down from the conscious effort, through the habitual, to the bones:

One of the other graduate students caught me in a comment I made regarding my need to keep working with children in order to keep current. Evidently, the way I worded this reflected a "teaching as transmission" model. I find this quite surprising. I feel I'm working very hard (via case study) to move away from this model, but my language unintentionally either hasn't caught up to my practice or else reflects that I still have a way to go, philosophically....(Journal, October 26, 1995)

Graduate studies classes in 1995 gave me ample opportunity to reflect on the lecture mode of educating. Even when we had dynamic, highly respected speakers, listening for extended periods of time, without dialogue, is very difficult. I realize more now that this is a wonderful opportunity for a guest speaker to sort out her or his own thoughts - to articulate in order to think more clearly - but it ignores the learner. It makes the assumption that what is said is what is heard, without checking with the listeners to make sure that this in fact is happening. We are so used to this in our educational system that challenging it seems not often to occur to us.

Even with excellent guest speakers, it's much more effective to throw out a point for discussion and let the listeners become involved in responding. The mind sort of "deadens" as a person talks on and on....seems arrogant of a speaker not to engage a group in conversation and thinking, rather than assume that just lecturing for a couple of hours is making the impression one thinks it is. I realized it's not just me; I see others sometimes snoozing or writing much more than any notes would require. (Journal, October 24, 1995)

This "business as usual" approach was probably more difficult to accept because Jean's classes were conducted very differently. Seeing the contrast between a class where everyone is really thinking and contributing and one where most students were snoozing or thinking (or writing) about something else, triggered my habitual reaction: "Can't we do something about this?" as expressed in the next journal entry:

...In our graduate level classes, some instructors seem unaware of how to guide discussion in self-reflective directions, whereas others certainly orchestrate for it. How far some of my graduate coursework deviates from the best practices in our assigned readings! Do I accept this graduate program as "jumping through hoops" as one fellow graduate student said, or do I have a responsibility as a learner to speak out? How do I do so effectively without getting myself in trouble? (Journal, October 30, 1995)

As I talked with fellow students about the "trouble" one can get into when one challenges the system, I became more sensitive to how difficult it is for my own students to challenge what I am doing in a class that may not be particularly effective for them. How does one question a teacher, who holds the power of pass or fail, in a way that does not damage one's standing as a student. How much easier to just "grin and bear it." Even now, I am not sure that this particular component of my struggles

should be included in my thesis work - will it cause any problems even in this innocuous form?

The following October (1996) my comments seemed to focus on particular students. Perhaps my growing awareness of attending to particular students with concerns is an indication of my paying attention more to students, the way their lives affect them, and how that affects the curriculum we construct together. By the second year of my study (1996), I was more aware of the physical cues that give away who has the authority in the classroom:

Gave a description, to my diploma students, of one of my own current ethical dilemmas. I noticed that after small group discussion all the students arranged chairs to face mine for large group discussion. This bothered me because I wanted to have students address one another. So, I changed my seat to be in the "audience." As some again switched their seats around a bit more to face me, I decided to "take notes" as a clearer way to remove myself as the focal point of the discussion and encourage them to address each other. An excellent discussion ensued between students, including points I hadn't thought of. (Journal, October 7, 1996)

Although this entry indicates I have discovered one practical way of shifting authority in the classroom, my next entry shows how difficult it is to change the cues that express what is really happening in a classroom. I start out on automatic pilot with an old cue, then catch myself, stop the action and try to replace an old habit with a cue more appropriate for someone trying to share her authority:

Asked for written reflection time, but people still continued to talk. I rather abruptly asked for all to respect my request for writing and still some continued to talk. So, I interrupted and said I didn't like the sound of my nagging, so we took a vote and most said they would rather talk than write first, so we switched to discussion first.

I remember now that *last* year's class wanted writing time first, so I was going by that. One student [this year] said, "I don't know enough to write about." (I thought everyone would have an opinion on the videocase just seen). A reminder to me to be more "awake" to student responses - learning together rather than "me boss" saying what we're doing next. (Journal, October 10, 1996)

Attempting to shift authority is not only difficult for the teacher, but it poses problems for the students too. I was surprised to hear students say that they wanted me to be more assertive, more in charge. Some seemed to assume that perhaps I was not too

sure what the teacher is supposed to do. This was a good reminder to spend more time acknowledging the shifting authority perspective. My next two entries from the end of October, 1996, find me trying to figure out how best to respond to students unfamiliar with sharing authority:

Asked students to do informal evaluation of the child development course so far. Pleasantly surprised by the positive comments about the course and myself as an approachable person. They offered some sound suggestions which we'll tackle a few at a time. One involved the confusion they felt about required readings for the course, so I typed up an organizational sheet. A few of the better students had done something like this on their own, but most of the class seemed to appreciate the time we took to get everyone feeling organized.

Next class I'll need to explain my own graduate work and what I'm attempting to accomplish. Some students say they'd like more talking / assertiveness from me. They seem to be saying: "Why don't you talk as much as other teachers?" I'll need to spend time explaining how I think people learn. (Journal, October 26, 1996)

As I spent time thinking about my shifting of authority in the classroom, I assumed that any effort to share my authority would be seen as a good thing by adult learners. I did not anticipate that some learners would feel uncomfortable with the unfamiliarity of this approach. It felt strange at first for me to address not only the content of the course, but the process of learning itself. Now, in 1997, it has become part of how I explain and negotiate with them the time we spend together in a course.

I need to think some more about how - when I shift my place as teacher in the classroom, the students also are required to shift their place as learners. I noticed from my informal evaluations at the end of October that some students find this very confusing. The teacher is not acting in ways that they've come to expect. Some feel I should be more "assertive." What does it mean for the individuals involved when knowledge is co-constructed. I think back to J., two years ago, who kept waiting to hear my opinion on a case and acknowledging at the end of the year that *not* knowing my opinion forced her to find her own.

Jean commented that sharing authority means changing the nature of what "safe" is. What's acceptable becomes much broader. Where is it acceptable, where is it "safe" to tell stories of one's own practice? Students need to negotiate a "safe" space with teachers in which to tell their stories. (Journal, October 29, 1996)

By the time adult students reach us in college or university, they have had many years of seeing the teacher as *the* authority in the classroom. For most of us, if we have made it this far, it is because we understand how the system works. You please teachers and

you get good grades. Anyone who challenges the teacher or the system risks getting into trouble. After twelve or sixteen years of being successful in this system, it takes a while to build enough trust to respond to a teacher who says, "Challenge me - tell me what you don't like and we'll change it - trust me." When I think of it, it amazes me how many are willing to take that risk.

It is also risky for me, since I am not any more used to this, as a teacher, than I am as a student. I have had even longer (forty years!) in the educational system than most of my students. When I say, "Feel free to disagree with me," I need to address whatever comes my way, often things that I cannot anticipate. It can be a rather painful growing experience, as some of my journal entries indicate. (Luckily, I have had many years of parenting to prepare me for this kind of growth). As I grow in experience and as a teaching person, I am more and more convinced of this personal-professional link - that my skills as a parent and my skills as a teacher are one and the same.

The benefit of this thesis exploration for me is that rather than feeling tired and bored - a "here we go again" feeling - after so many years of teaching, I am looking forward to my next set of classes so I can test out my new theories. In fall 1997, I tried a whole new approach as described in this next journal entry. It was just fascinating and it seems to have been effective judging by responses from students and from colleagues.

This year I teach four full days per week and twice a week I take a shift with a difficult child at a time when students can observe me. Our Learning Through Play class is divided into halves - one half runs the preschool program, guided by a preschool teacher and the other half is with me - covering the curriculum. At first I was in the classroom with my half group of students, watching a play video and discussing what we saw, when it dawned on me that we had a preschool program operating "live" next door. So we all scurried to the observation window. Now I struggle with how best to have a conversation about what we're seeing and connect it to course readings. I sense we have discussions that hit more at the heart of what we need to think about to become better players with children.

Recently I requested that we break the class into four "coaching groups" to allow for more personal discussion about how we play with children based on our experiences in our Rm. 212 Play Program. This way students will get some feedback from instructors other than me. I find that working side by side with students in Rm. 212 gives me a different perspective than just watching through the observation window. It is much clearer who's pitching in and truly interacting with the children and

who still see themselves as tourists just passing through. Our discussions are real, based on what we see each other doing, and I have a much clearer sense of what needs emphasis in the play course, rather than just relying on topics the text presents. I do think this batch of students will be better prepared. (Journal, October 6, 1997)

In past years, it took much longer to get a sense of how each new group of students interacted with children. We would visit them on site in centres and would often hear how nervous our visits made them and how "not themselves" they were with children. We would postpone videotaping until the end of the first semester, waiting until they felt comfortable in their placement and comfortable with us visiting. This year, now that everyone is in the college play program with the observation window, and I am part of the action, videotaping was much quicker and easier - and less of a "big deal" since everyone was part of it.

One thing that's started to be really interesting for me is the more intensive use of videotaping. This month I have videotaped each student (for 5-10 min.) in our college play program and have asked them to reflect on it in their journals. As the instructor for Learning Through Play, I find this most enlightening. Some wax eloquent in their journals on the theories of play from their text, but very little of that vocabulary spills over into their reflections on what they see themselves doing with children on tape. It's a wonderful opportunity to get at what reflection really means. (Journal, October 20, 1997)

Watching the class play with children made it much clearer what needed emphasis in the Learning To Play course. Some things that I had taken for granted, like having conversations with children, took much longer for some students to get into than I expected. Videotaping allows them to see what I see and together we can have a conversation about what we both see on the tape. In all, each student was videotaped at least three times during the semester.

Although it's very time-consuming to review each student's videotape, there's a wealth of connections to their readings on play and child development. Now that most of the play readings have been discussed, the course becomes the play program and seeing how the principles we've discussed show up (or not) in their play sequences. I'm really enjoying it, as it focuses my teaching and makes me feel like we're doing something real and helpful. I've been wanting to do this for some time and it's as fascinating as I thought it might be.

As I re-read the past Octobers, I'm struck by how automatic it has become to monitor what I'm saying. I'm rarely tempted to jump in with

my opinion and much more likely to emphasize to students that articulation is a way of thinking and not necessarily a person's last word on the subject. I think I'm paying much more attention to how we're learning and not so fixated on the *what*, knowing that it's the thinking processes, the noticing, the listening to others' perspectives, the articulating-to-know that helps a teacher improve her practice.

It certainly has worked for me as I work through this thesis process and I can't help but replicate that process with my students. I feel much more like I'm orchestrating a learning process, rather than following a textbook and covering the material. It's getting "covered," but in a much more thoughtful way, I think. (Journal, October 20, 1997)

I am really pleased with the emphasis these journal entries have on how students are learning, rather than on how I am teaching. The next entry reminds me how much I enjoy teaching when ideas surface unexpectedly and then become incorporated as "something we always do." Our end of the day discussion groups is one example of a learning strategy that evolved this fall.

Our Learning Through Play class does two twenty-minute observations behind the window to Rm. 212, discussing what we're seeing. I'm now beginning to have this group meet with the group that's been with the children to discuss the events of the day and the play and development issues that arise. Why didn't I think of this sooner? It makes for vivid discussion because it's real and connected to their studies. Since I also spend a brief time with a challenging child, we have some great discussions when he "acts up." As I don't always know the best thing to do, it's a clear way to make us learners together.

I'm just beginning to do these end of day discussions on a regular basis and make them part of the course. As we often have parents observing us from "the couch" or from behind the window, I'm often caught in conversations [with parents] that remind me how much of what we're training for is the ability to communicate what we understand [about child development] with parents - and to listen and accept what they need to tell us. This aspect - talking to parents - has never been emphasized enough in our program. Now we have the perfect opportunity for our students to get some practice. (Journal, October 24, 1997)

My next journal entry comments on my viewing of a videotape of myself teaching. In this sequence, I deviated from the course content for a few moments of self-indulgence. Now that I am developing a clearer understanding of how people learn, I am supersensitive to how much of the personal I inject. It is so easy to use the class for my own enjoyment, when it may not be the most helpful use of time for students preparing to be teachers.

The video starts with me telling stories.... What seemed like a long exchange was actually timed for three minutes. I guess it could come under the heading - "building rapport." I just want to make sure to keep track of the time. It's so easy to let it evolve into "therapy for the instructor: listen to me while I talk about what I need to talk about." It's unfair to have any one person (even the instructor) hog the lion's share of time. My impression is that I come across as a lot more tentative than I think I am.

I sometimes wish I had more humor in my classes - but as I watch, I'm not sure how I'd do this. The more I remove myself from center stage, the less opportunity to "perform." Maybe this will give them time to find each other's sense of humor. (Journal, October 25, 1997)

The last entry for October, 1997, describes in detail one very satisfying Learning Through Play class for me. Students hear what I, as a college instructor, say about dealing with children's behavior, but they rarely get to see me in actual situations. The following details for me what preparing students to work with children, authentically (as Magna Gerber calls it), is all about:

One thing that sticks out in my mind about the past two weeks is the comment in K's journal about how much she's learning from watching our preschool teacher (and sometimes me) with children. We had one incident with our "challenging child" where he started to bomb some Lego structures that some children had built for their little bears. One student said she was stunned and not sure what to do and was glad when I firmly stepped in and said, "No planes in the bear houses."

This child wouldn't stop so I placed myself between him and his plane and the Lego. He got mad at this and said something like, "I'm getting very grouchy with you" and I replied (without thinking), "And I'm getting pretty grouchy with you too." I insisted he land his plane where he wouldn't bother anyone and he insisted on crashing where he wasn't welcomed, so I forcibly removed him to a quiet area. He was not happy with me and gave me a not-very-serious kick. I insisted we go under the loft where it was quiet and after a while and a few "I hate you's" he quietly said, "I just want to land my planes in the blocks, not the Legos." I suggested we check and see if there was a place to land now. When we got to that part of the room, everyone had left, so I said it was a great place to land an airplane. He quickly began some good play.

All this while the students are watching - what a hoot - because you really don't know what you (or the child) is going to do next. It made for some interesting discussion at the close of the day as I and one of the other instructors shared the conversations we had with mom, who was also watching all this from behind the observation window.

I think our discussion showed students that each incident takes some thinking and trial and error to try to figure it out. There are no easy answers and some children are challenging for even the most experienced teachers. Different people use different approaches. There were times when two of the students in particular rescued me when I wasn't sure what to do with this kid next and I thanked them for that. In all, it seems to make our Learning Through Play course more really helpful. And it's sure way more fun! (Journal, October 31, 1997)

We often say that children are our best teachers - and this incident was a good illustration. Students read and discuss with us the various ways to be patient and caring with children, using problem-solving approaches. Sometimes I think that we instructors may come across as "doormats," as we rarely talk about the need to be firm and direct with some children when the occasion demands it. This incident gave us a good opportunity to discuss the range of responses needed from adults to the range of behaviors children present to us. It also demonstrated (I hope) a consistency between the verbal and non-verbal, as we sometimes hear students say the appropriate words, but not back them up with the non-verbal message that gives the words their meaning. The sharing of various viewpoints from instructors and students, and struggling to figure out what might work, was very much like what teachers do at the end of a hectic day and truly had the feel of shared authority.

November seems to be the month with the most entries in my journal. Perhaps it is when I do the most thinking about my teaching - when I am right in the thick of it. As I read back over all my Novembers, I can trace the thread of shifting authority as it thickens. In September, students and I are just beginning our explorations together and teacher direction then is strongest. In October, students begin to find their voice in the classroom and I begin to limit mine. By November, we are usually in the full swing of the cycle. I try to limit myself to an occasional well-placed comment or question, and step out of the way.

In my journal entries for November, 1994, there seems to be a dawning awareness of the *weak* connection between how much I talk in class and how much students seem to be learning. As I re-read the first entry, I realize that I am modeling the very behavior I would like students *not* to do! Many of us have grown up with the idea that it is the adult's responsibility to "lecture" children about their behavior and set punishments for transgressions. As one student expresses this traditional opinion, the expert in me rises

to the bait and inappropriately lectures her in the same way. It does not seem to work any better with adults than it does with children.

The topic was punishment vs. consequences and the need to link parenting and teaching responses to children's behavior. Ouch - did it again! One student brought up the role of the adult in "talking" to children about their behavior and I interrupted with "expert" opinion. It would have been more effective to

1. ask her to elaborate / explain her point in more detail
2. ask others to contribute - get each other thinking
3. not put in my opinion

My opinion, too quickly expressed, seemed to make the speaker defensive. Her face said, "I don't agree." Would have been more effective to let students carry on discussion - no comment from me - and each draw own conclusions (they will anyway). I need to get into role of question-asker / facilitator, not expert. (Journal, November 2, 1994)

These connections do not come easily to many students and it is one of the issues I struggle with as a teacher sharing authority and trying to guide students into making connections between their personal stories and the principles of child development. If only learning were as simple as just telling them what to think! It is easy for students, without classroom experience, to underestimate how challenging teaching can be, as reflected in one fellow's comment in this journal excerpt:

Drawing general principles from specific examples: inexperienced students don't automatically do this. Often they end with a story and perhaps an opinion / reflection, but don't always go the next step and relate it to principles of teaching or how it might influence their future teaching. One student: "I think I'll be a 'natural' as a teacher. If I'm not, then I might be more interested in really paying attention to courses like this one." (Journal, November 9, 1994)

The next entry continues this theme of linking the specific and personal to the general and abstract. As I write this in 1998, I wonder, since there is no way to prepare students for every situation they will encounter, if the best I can do is help them to articulate clearly the principles underlying their actions. This seems particularly important when the issues relate to punishment, building self-esteem and how children learn.

In November, 1995, I was beginning to pay more attention to how learners think and feel, but I still seemed to have the attitude that if I could just find the right strategy, I could get them to think the way I think. Now, however, I find I am gradually coming to

a better appreciation of my place in helping students work through the thinking they are already doing, with a little more awareness of the complexity of it all.

I think I would be very embarrassed to admit what a struggle sharing authority in the classroom has been for me, except that when I look around, at my fellow teachers and at my university professors, it is obviously a struggle in which we are all engaged at varying levels of awareness.

...I'm more and more intrigued by how college and university teachers perceive their own teaching:

- 1) how to prepare reflective practitioners if you're not one - or as good a one as you could be - yourself?
- 2) university /college teachers are prepared to teach content, but how much preparation for actual teaching?

(Journal, November 7, 1995)

Taking graduate courses, doing the professional reading that entails, and having conversations with advisors has kept my awareness level percolating. My next entry contains an advisor's comment that helped me put my thesis writing into perspective.

...my teaching has been influenced / changed over time via dialogues with students. They've had a powerful (sometimes painful) effect on helping me improve how I teach... According to Margaret, I'm challenging myself at the same time others are challenging me....not a straight line journey from A to B, but a different patterning of pieces fitted together...(Journal, November 7, 1995)

My next entry for November, 1995, refers to a student from the year before who kept interrupting me to make sure I mentioned Bowlby's name whenever the subject of attachment came up. I think now I would be more likely to respond with interest, rather than the irritation I remember, and give him the floor to share his perspective.

Students' reactions, questions and practices prod me into digging deeper. For example, Bowlby (1988) is a familiar name to me thanks to the persistence of one student, who refused to discuss attachment without throwing in his name. I'm starting to realize that this dynamic is much like the interactive one now at the fore in child development theory. We recognize parenting as an interactive process; parent and children influence and shape each other. I wonder if anyone has written about teaching in this interactive, mutually shaping, way? (Journal, November 9, 1995)

Perhaps this incident now sticks in my mind, in 1998, because I knew intuitively that my response was not an appropriate one, although I did not know an alternative at that time. Bowlby (1988) has since made his way into the child development texts and I keep a copy of his work handy to lend out to any interested students. We have come to think of teachers as forming minds, shaping future citizens, modeling for students, but it is quite intriguing to think of the parallel process that I certainly never gave much thought to before. Since teaching, like parenting, is an interactive process, then the teacher I am becoming is shaped and formed by the students I have. Isn't that interesting.

I am not sure what that really means - to be shaped by my students. I know that whatever I do that gets a good response from students encourages me to do more of the same - like case-based instruction or a centers approach in elementary school. The idea of it all - those hundreds of students, some probably more than others, rubbing against my teaching - a little nudge here, a nick there - the erosion of a seashore - the smoothing of pebbles - the grinding to sand - the subtle changing of a coastline - what a very different perspective of shifting authority - like the sand shifting on the dunes - slowly subtly noticed only at a distance of space, or in the case of my teaching, time.

The next entry for 1995, my coursework year at university, refers to thoughts that arise while I am a student, thinking about the use of classtime and the parallels of concrete learning for children and adults.

As an instructor, articulate why I'm doing what I'm doing when I'm doing it....it's a model for what I'd like students to do with children. Still brings home the notion that you learn when intellectually engaged with ideas, as children concretely engage with materials....How much has any of us changed / become more reflective / questioned our own ideas /practices at the end of this class/course? I took up class time today to help clarify my thoughts. So what didn't another person express that would have helped her clarify her thinking?

The ability to continually check with students to see if they're learning and make adjustments when they're not - so simple, yet so rarely honored. (Journal, November 8, 1995)

One of the disadvantages of seminars that have only large group discussions is that only the teacher and a few of the more verbal students get to do the articulating that helps them think. One of our graduate seminars had a professor that was very open to student feedback. I remember being very impressed with her, as we also had professors who

were not. As a group we requested more discussion time interspersed with lectures, and topics more pertinent to the teacher education specialty we were in. Her flexibility encouraged me to try something different when it was my time to present. I used small group discussion rather than the method of choice - mini-lecture with overhead. I was not sure if an approach where I said very little would be acceptable, but was very relieved when it was favorably received by all:

..[the professor] took comments in stride, saying "Let's try this next time." She made time to try student suggested approaches - not defensive at all - excellent model...I decided to try my discussion (small group) exercise with this sophisticated doctoral group, even though I had no way of knowing how they'd respond. It was a risk / experiment - as is all teaching. Was pleased that the professor said it made her think that next time the course is offered, she'll throw it open to students for input on format right at the start. (Journal, November 8, 1995)

The next entry of that year seems to be a good example of how sharing authority in the classroom provides an opportunity for students (as well as the teacher) to guide the discussion in what they think are important directions. The following entry describes a student responding to some uninformed comments made in class on a recent community tragedy.

...discussion in my education class of recent suicides in our community and one very young student saying that the boys must have been sick in the head or brain damaged in some way. Another student, concerned with this simplistic response, found handouts for us on suicide. I'll give her time in a future class to share some thoughts. I've made her overheads and handouts from the material she brought in. Lots of good stats on Alberta. I need to remember to encourage her to ask questions to get us thinking rather than just talking to us. The whole class and myself are apt to learn more because of her initiative and passion on this subject and someone, besides me, being the teacher. This came about via small group discussion. Vital issues and biases seem to be more easily articulated when students are comfortable with a few others.

Need for me to refrain from inserting my own opinions. It cuts off discussion too soon. How difficult to remember to ask the thinking questions rather than "pronounce" the correct views (how easily I slip back into these ineffective patterns). I need to take time every class or so to see what learners think about what's happening in class. I still get caught up in "so many things to cover" and no time to do it all. (Journal, November 28, 1995)

Whenever students do presentations, most revert to the overhead and lecture method - the way they have watched teachers share information. It reminds me to work more closely with them to brainstorm some alternate ways of helping fellow students think about the issues. At this point in 1995, I still had not figured out how to get consistent feedback on my teaching. It needed reading about the use of after/class groups (Shor, 1992) to help that take off. These optional groups would stay at the end of each class and critique the session that we had just finished in lieu of an assignment. I found these informal discussions invaluable in fine-tuning my teaching.

In November, 1995, Jean came into one of our graduate seminars as a guest lecturer and proceeded as usual to generate discussion. My journal reflections on that session contain the seeds of some ideas that I was to implement later in our early childhood program.

Some of the phrases Jean uses twig my thinking even though I'm not exactly sure what they all mean: "staying awake to embodied knowledge" "what's going on here?" "running into ourselves" "spaces to hear" ...all this talk about teacher education alternative models - forcing me to take a look at our own piece meal college program and how it could be different: one cohort group...integrated curriculum via topics rather than individual courses...taught in a team fashion...readings, activities, discussions, projects from each discipline planned as a team....(Journal, November 30, 1995)

The following year, 1996, my November comments were strongly flavored by the research on teaching that I was reading and by my efforts to figure out just how do students learn child development in a way that will influence their interactions with children once they are running programs of their own. I struggle with the question of authority in the classroom - who makes the decisions that guide our learning and what are the subtle indicators that reveal this process on a daily basis. In 1996, my journal is full of questions still looking for answers to be found somewhere in my journal writing.

How many times have I brushed aside what was important to a student because I wanted to get on with my own agenda? It leads me back again to the question of narrative authority - whose voice is the strongest in the classroom? The teacher who decides what the student needs to know? The student who has questions that need discussion? Do we instructors really know what needs to be learned, even though many of us have not worked full time with children in years? Do students really know enough to ask the questions that will best address the information they need to work with children? How do we together author the learning

experience most helpful in preparing individuals to work with children?
(Journal, November 1, 1996)

Margaret Olson (1993) explores this issue from the students' perspective, especially once they have begun their practicum experience. When teachers are trying to cover the curriculum as presented in texts written by experts, there is often little time (or encouragement) for students to question what they are reading, what they are experiencing in practicum, or what the teacher is "delivering" as important to know. This next entry from November, 1996, reflects on the unequal power structure in classrooms that discourages student voice.

In our college program, we do allow time for students to discuss and challenge the knowledge we share. However, the system of grading and needing instructor references for further education or employment creates a setting that makes this difficult to do. How does one share an authority that implicitly is vested in the teacher - a system that's been engrained for twelve or more years.

The recent dissatisfaction of my ECD diploma students, most of whom have been working for years in the childcare field, jolts me into realizing, yet again, that what I choose as curriculum materials may not be what best addresses what they want to learn at this stage in their careers. I've forgotten again this year to spend time up front getting a clear idea of what we're about to embark on. I'm always so committed to getting started doing something interesting that I forget to truly check to see if how I want to spend our time together is how the students would choose to spend our time together. (Journal, November 1, 1996)

It is very easy to understand the allure of the "way we've always done it." Lecture, take notes, give exams, is so straightforward; it is a shame that it does not work in preparing teachers. It may be an efficient way to transmit facts, but teaching is so much more than just facts. If I want my students to win over the hearts of their children in order to reach their minds, I must first make sure that they *experience* themselves what I wish them to provide for children.

How much simpler it would be to stay with the way we've always done it: design a course, decide what goes into it, decide on the assignments and their relative worth and just announce that this course needs completion for those who want a diploma or a degree. That's clear and familiar and generally acceptable. This struggling to find out how a course actually affects and influences how a person interacts with children is amazingly difficult - and confusing for both instructor and students. You try things that don't work out as well as you'd hoped. You change things that aren't working well and this upsets students who are

so used to sureties from teachers. It's messy and difficult and sometimes discouraging.

I thought by now I would have my courses smoothly running along. An honest check with the diploma students has reminded me how much off the mark I've gone. And the upsetting thing is that they're right! I can see now that I've gotten carried away with my fascination for cases, and in our short one hour per week together, have paid little attention to the heart of the process, reflecting on one's own practice - and listening more carefully to what students suggest. (Journal, November 1, 1996)

As I re-read that last journal entry, I wonder about all the angst it seems to reflect. It now seems so simple - this consulting with the learners as you go. Without this research journal to document my progress, it would be very easy to forget how far I have come in my understanding and all those times of struggle it took to get here. I remember sharing that November 1, 1996 journal with my diploma students and was surprised at how well it was received. It is risky as a teacher to appear uncertain, and yet, in all honesty, we often are.

Often in a group of new students there are one or two who take longer to catch on to the notion of talking and writing as thinking. They are very quick to question others about their opinions and try to convince them of the "error of their ways." For those who understand that discussion is a process of learning, not an end product, this snap to judgment can really discourage the open and trusting sharing of thoughts that is needed when students begin to examine their own philosophies of child development. I have learned to step in sooner and take these students aside to discuss the purpose of class discussion more directly, in addition to the explanations I give the class as a whole. It takes some of them a while to realize that their challenging behavior is annoying, sometimes threatening to others. As I am a person who does not readily pick up on non-verbal cues, I know that direct conversations are sometimes needed to "clue a person in," even though these conversations are not always easy to begin.

This year's group needed guidance in letting everyone express their opinions. It needed to be made clear that there was no need to jump on someone and badger her about why she thinks the way she does or start an argument about each point. It's quite all right to present viewpoints, wonder aloud and trust people to make up their own minds. Change is gradual. Articulating thoughts doesn't mean that they are the person's final thoughts on a subject. I've come to recognize this process of articulating as a means of critically examining one's beliefs - a necessary step to possible change. I could have helped this year's group more with

this, as it continued to be a concern throughout the year and some students mentioned that they became silent rather than feel criticized. (Journal, November 12, 1996)

I also think that this process of group discussion will prove valuable to students once they are working in children's programs and find themselves in meetings, workshops or on committees. I was glad to read an echo of this notion of "articulating to think" in Ira Shor (1992) when he links discussion and action. He also has helped me rethink my unexamined habit of summarizing case discussions at the end.

"Dialogue is the thread of communication that binds people together and prepares them for reflective action" (Shor, 1992, p. 86). He goes on to say that a teacher's "...summarizing the class hour is a ritual to end a lesson instead of inviting students to share in making the summary" (p. 95). I'll need to think about this. Perhaps it would help students understand more of what we've done in a discussion if we were to summarize more and have them help in the summary. (Journal, November 12, 1996)

In addition to his thoughts on who does the summarizing in a classroom of shared authority, Shor (1992) describes what else an effective facilitator might do:

Here's a new thought - Shor is talking about dialogue in the classroom and the teacher's ability, her "conceptual habit of mind," to synthesize student remarks into "questions and statements which re-present that material as a focused problem for further reflection." The teacher models reflection on the discussion while class is in progress. He describes this as the biggest challenge for the dialogic teacher (p.113). (Journal, November 12, 1996)

I do usually remember to summarize discussions or pose questions for further consideration in journals, but I had once again forgotten the modeling aspect of all we do as teachers and how powerful a teaching strategy that is. Reading Shor (1992) helped me remain confident as a teacher by acknowledging the difficulties one can get into when making changes. He commented on the reaction of students when a teacher tries to be more of a facilitator. I felt reassured that students' questioning responses were more a by-product of the process, than a reflection on how well I was doing my job. It helped me keep things in perspective.

Shor (1992) acknowledges what I observed in September as my class started, a questioning of me by students needing me to be more assertive. Their comments included: "Not let students take over." "They didn't

come to hear what others have to say, but what the teacher has to say." This reminded me of Shor's describing how "...students can doubt the seriousness of the course, thinking that real education is not going on here because the teacher's authority is low-profile and nontraditional" (p. 157).

Quite amusing to my assertive self - reminds me to take more time to explain what we're doing. As Shor reminds, students haven't had much chance to practice dialogue and collaboration. It's "naive to think that my sincerity or my good intentions are enough to transform their prior experiences. I have to provide a democratic structure and invite them into it step by step" (p. 158). (Journal, November 12, 1996)

My next comments refer to Shor's (1992) use of an after/class group to evaluate how the class went that day and suggest any changes. The more I made this idea a regular part of my classes, the more I was able to use this small intimate group as a sounding board for guiding our learning together. I sensed that meeting regularly and acting on their suggestions created a feeling of trust that made our conversations comfortable and had the unexpected effect of making me feel good about the teaching I was doing. Crediting attendance in lieu of one or two assignments seems to ensure a group that consistently attended.

In the next journal entry, I again refer to my reading of Shor (1992) as he addresses one of the most difficult issues I face in preparing students to work with children, that of asking them to question some of their long-held beliefs about disciplining children. One of the most difficult of these to shake is thinking that children must be punished for misbehavior in ways that undermine both the child's self-esteem and the relationship with the adult in charge. I used to think that just telling students about alternatives would be enough to bring about a more understanding approach to misbehavior, but I learned through this thesis process that change comes slowly and that students have to talk themselves (write themselves) to a more enlightened place:

A comment of Shor's (1992) resonates with something I've been figuring out over the past few years. Although he's discussing racism, the comment applies to my struggle with students who take a punishing view of children's behavior: "I try not to lecture students on good and evil; I cannot moralize or sermonize them....any superior attitude on my part will only make the racist students defensively cling to their beliefs; I do what I can to treat racist remarks with patience to keep the dialogue open; I continue asking questions and making comments in a manner that helps students feel free to express their authentic values; I try to treat all students as intelligent people who want to do the right thing." (p. 228). (Journal, November 13, 1996)

This next excerpt describes a brief exchange with one student that helped me seriously question the effectiveness of the lecture-transmission mode of education. The student's honesty made me realize that she was not accepting a new approach to handling misbehavior just because I said so. It made me realize that all these years I taught with the assumption that sharing all I know about children would influence my students' actions with children. My early childhood background convinced me that children construct knowledge rather than absorb what they are told, but it took me much longer to figure out that it also works that way with adults.

For so many years I described the current state of research and what are the most effective / non-damaging ways to respond to a child's misbehavior - thinking that my ideas would be accepted. After all, I was being paid to share them. I do tons of reading and I've had lots of experience and education. It's all very reasonable. At the very least I thought students came to a child development course because they were open to considering some new perspectives.

I can remember how shocked I was a couple of years ago (as my classroom became more truly democratic and nonjudgmental) to have a student respond to my observations with, "Well, that's just your opinion" and proceed to share her opinion as equally valid as mine. If I ever had any doubts about the transfer method of education, that finished them. And I realized that only through on-going dialogue, reading and writing - where a student hears what many others have to say (not just the teacher) - can individual viewpoints safely emerge for group scrutiny... (Journal, November 13, 1996)

Keeping a research journal, writing down my thoughts at the end of the day or week on how my classes are going - just the writing itself - has helped me to reflect in a deliberate way about my teaching. I had no idea when I started that writing could focus my teaching in a way that reveals the details that underpin what happens in my classroom. My next entry reflects my appreciation of this process.

Most of my teaching career has been rushing from one class to another, gathering resources and trying to present information in an interesting way, mulling things over while walking, but very little *deliberate* reflection such as this research journal demands. I can see that my classes / students / myself as a teacher and a person are the better for the journaling I'm now doing. My students seem quite enthusiastic (overall) about my courses and I feel much more satisfied. I'm hopeful that I'll see consistently stronger graduates. (Journal, November 19, 1996)

The dynamics of whole class discussion continue to fascinate me. I remain puzzled about how this exactly works. Students share their thoughts, listen for responses, sometimes heartily defend stands they are already in the process of changing, hold some opinions as more valid than others because they happen to like the speaker more. Some speak more than their share until others wish they would quit, while others rarely say anything at all, but appear to be listening intently. Although there seems to be variety in how students use whole group discussion, it seems that articulation, whether oral or written, moves the thinking process along. I find that I am more likely now to monitor my own dialogues with people with a greater awareness of how much I am "thinking aloud."

I'm beginning to look at discussion as a process. I see people, voicing opinions, (however preposterous they seem to me) as being at one stage in the process of developing those opinions, rather than stating their final thoughts on a topic. Often, they are thinking aloud and that opinion, no matter how strongly voiced, may actually be in the process of changing as they speak. So - a forum to allow it to be expressed, as a step toward deeper understanding, is very helpful. (Journal, November 19, 1996)

As my November, 1996 entries come to a close, it seems that large group discussion has become the property of the students. They are beginning to guide each other in the process and to realize the need to respect and be curious about what each other has to say. During this time, I was reading *Exploring Blue Highways* (Allen, Cary, and Delgado, 1995), and found it very useful in helping me understand how the authority in my classroom continued to shift.

Yesterday's child development class was the first time I can remember that my adult classes had the feel of my classrooms with children, when I'm the consultant / resource person, moving from group to group to individual while each is busy and involved in a variety of projects.

During a "hot" discussion of one video, a student interjected a comment on the process: "...listen to everyone's ideas without judgment - express your own - don't jump on anyone." At first I thought - uh, oh - that's my role (keeping everyone in line), but now I think that maybe it was more effective coming from a student. Maybe, sometimes, it's more beneficial for instructors *not* to be "on top of" it all. In *Exploring Blue Highways*, Allen (1995, p. 211) describes the kind of classroom I'm aiming for: "People were listening to each other. No one was trying to convince anyone of anything, there was no debate, but they were learning from each other; everyone was questioning, wondering...."

In the context of my classroom, this also seems to be true [at least sometimes]. My research process and coursework with Jean helps me set

the climate for this for myself and for my students. Students intuitively feel most comfortable with this approach and will remind classmates (and sometimes me as I think about it) that there's no need to "challenge" someone's ideas - that just sharing perspectives is enough to get people really thinking. (Journal, November 22, 1996)

By November of 1997, I have very few journal entries dealing with my shifting authority in my classroom or teaching with cases. Rather, I seem to be concentrating on individual students and how they are learning. I hope this means that I am evolving more of a democratic approach in my courses.

In **January**, 1995, I wrote mostly about the use of case-based instruction and said very little about myself in the classroom. It seems that, at the beginning of my study, I saw this research project as narrowly focused on the use of cases. Two years ago (1996), as I explored the use of cases, I also began to question my place in the classroom:

A thought on the first day of new term: how the place of the teacher changes substantially in my new approach [using cases] and how difficult a process it is, even for someone like me who's very willing. (Journal, January 8, 1996)

In my next excerpt from January, 1996, I describe watching a fellow instructor in one of our joint practicum seminars. This incident is a good reminder of what I was comfortable doing before my authority in the classroom began to shift:

Observation during practicum seminar with all ECD students and instructors. One instructor took the lead and did a typical thing (one I've often done, but see differently now). Rather than have students talk in small groups about their experiences during their first week in practicum, she called on each one (18 or so) to share something with all of us. They had no preparation ahead of time for this. All students directed their comments to her. She commented on each student's remarks. Some students spoke at length and had friendly exchanges with the instructor. Other students were quickly passed over with a sentence or two.

I'm sure I've done this, but it now appears to me to be very teacher-centered, even though it's not meant to be. Small groups, sharing their experiences, would have elicited more candid comment with more time for each person to talk. It would have been less stressful and promoted more reflection. Without the current studying that I'm doing, I don't think I'd even have noticed this. I now find I'm increasingly impatient with approaches that don't trust the learner. (Journal, January 13, 1996)

Even the professional reading that I was doing two years ago took on new meaning as I felt the authority in my classroom shifting. It seems that new information has to fit in somewhere with what we already understand. If there is no "good fit" at that moment, its meaning is obscured. This lack of "fit" helps me understand a little better why the best information on early childhood, shared in my classes, often just did not take hold:

After reading some of Jean's book on curriculum (Clandinin and Connelly, 1995), I woke up this morning realizing that I've begun to understand her notion of curriculum - the broadness of it - for the first time. I read the same book a while ago, [and it didn't make much of an impression on me.] Now, however, that I'm spending more time consciously thinking of the teaching I do, I realize how revolutionary it is! And that it's exactly what I've begun to think about. (Journal, January 22, 1996)

My last entry of January, 1996, has me thinking about the process of writing itself. The more I realize the value of journal writing, the more I want my students to find the same benefits in their own journal writing. I am not a journal writer by nature, so this thesis process is one of the few times in my life when I have had the luxury (and necessity) of limitless writing-to-know. I always assigned journals to my students, but never with such an understanding of the thinking tool it can be:

This narrative process is very different - writing as thinking - thinking on paper - every once in a while writing a thought I didn't know I had. Looking at it - wondering "who wrote that?" Knowing it must have been me because no one else is here. (Journal, January 31, 1996)

As the winter term started in January, 1997, I was taking our after/class group quite seriously and incorporating many of their ideas into the following classes. Those regular discussions were very helpful in getting me to reflect on my own teaching and to share some of those reflections with my students. Reading Britzman (1989) at that time helped me understand the consulting process that kept nudging my shifting authority:

...Reading the Britzman (1989) article makes me realize I must remember to take the time at the beginning of my courses to explain to students why we're taking the approach that we are. Important to have a discussion on the nature of teaching - how to prepare for it - how the study of child development fits into that preparation - how my course struggles to address what they need to do as they teach. Although the form of assignments is simple (journalling), the content is complex and the grading reflects the week by week exploration they do - the depth and breadth that's reflected in their journals. Interesting how my own

journey of professional growth intersects with theirs. (Journal, January 3, 1997)

Initiating after/class groups, to critique each class just finished, is one of the most helpful things I have done to raise my level of awareness of what is happening in my classes. As we meet and trust builds, we seem to be able to look at the class objectively and decide what worked that needs keeping, and what was not very effective and could be replaced by something more helpful.

After my Child Development class, I invited anyone interested to join an after/class group - 9 people out of 19 stayed...about half of them had participated last semester and the other half were new....excellent comments as usual: ...we agreed that I'd try to insert more activities into classes...They again reminded me to do a large group discussion to follow up small group discussions. I don't think this is always necessary and the predictability gets a bit boring, but they obviously value it more than I do, so I'll do it.

Could have let the first after/class meeting negotiate the time and the assignment trade off, rather than having all predetermined by me. Odd how my first thought is to decide on these. After all, *I'm* the teacher. *I'm* used to making the decisions. That's my job! But as I write and reflect, I begin to remember the benefits of negotiation and mutual agreement! How easily I forget. (Journal, January 3, 1997)

Our after/class group discussions proved to be a good check on how assignments are going and a good measure of stress levels. It also helped me figure out the small group - whole group discussion balance and reassured me that students do appreciate my participation in small group discussion.

They suggested I sit in on their small group discussions. I commented that I often felt I was intruding on the flow of discussion, shaping it in ways it might not go if I weren't there. They suggested I take turns with groups from class to class - and stay for whole discussions, rather than catching only snippets from each group. (Journal, January 9, 1997)

I am quite often surprised which of my initiatives are well received, and which are not. For instance, I was quite amazed to find out that my effort to share authority was seen as a "weakness." Perhaps they are so used to the certainties of teachers, that to become partners in negotiating curriculum is very unfamiliar territory, as this next entry shows:

....They said they'd like to hear my opinions more often - I talked a bit about how I think people learn from talking through their *own* thoughts... They seem to assume I'm not doing the talking because I don't think they

want to hear my opinion! One student described how another instructor makes her points through telling stories of her own practice and she finds this effective.

It's interesting how the more literal-minded seem to assume that I'm struggling to improve my teaching and need ideas about how others do it, without realizing I've used those approaches before, that I wish to do more than entertain or keep their interest. I want them to truly think - to examine why they think and act with children the way they do, and how the study of child development helps critique those habits.
(Journal, January 9, 1997)

The education students were very reassuring in their after/class group comments, perhaps because most of their other courses are exclusively lecture format. I think I have finally, in 1998, come to terms with small group discussion and I am not sure why I saw it as such an issue. I sit in on small groups whenever it "feels" right, and everyone still has lots of time to express thoughts to each other. I think this "sometimes present" approach on my part keeps me tuned in and available to students. I generally just listen now and only occasionally add a short question or comment that I think might be helpful.

A year ago, in 1997, I describe in this next journal entry the on-going struggle to "bite my tongue" which no longer seems to plague me. Perhaps I am finally convinced that, no matter how brilliant, my comments alone will not change habits.

The after/class education group commented on the relaxed atmosphere in the class, well organized structure and clear expectations. In my enthusiasm for improvement, I'd forgotten how reassuring it is to hear what went well. A reminder to give some choice in length of small and large group discussions. This group also likes it when the instructor sits in on small group discussion and participates. I'll do this, although I still feel it redirects the conversation to the instructor and there's a tendency to "play to the audience" - in both directions, now that I think of it. The temptation for me to participate is overwhelming - even as I realize that the more I talk, the more I learn and use airtime that someone else could be using to articulate *their* thoughts and be learning.

I struggle with that tension between being viewed as the authority and unquestioningly accepted (and sometimes misinterpreted because what I'm trying to articulate and what others hear is all too often quite different) and knowing that what I say is easily heard and dismissed by learners who need to articulate their own thoughts in order to examine what *they* think/know. How can both of these happen at once? I don't know - but it does. (Journal, January 10, 1997)

In January, 1997, I reflected on how often I seem to be repeating the very behaviors I was working to change. Struggling with sharing authority has made me more sensitive to how difficult it is for students to change some of their own behaviors with children even when they would like to. Changing behaviors that have been engrained for years requires a lot of hard work - and time - even for the most dedicated of us. I think my own struggles have made me more patient with change.

I'm mostly struck by how repetitious I am, needing reminders of the same teaching strategies, including consulting / negotiating with the learners. How very difficult this is for me. Makes me realize the need to be *patient* with students. How long a process it is to re-learn how to interact with children - or with adult students! The encouraging thing is that there's no going-back. It's a process and you just keep at it, trying to "stay awake," as Jean said. How will I manage to do that once this thesis is finished! (Journal, January 11, 1997)

It is easy to get discouraged when you keep making the same mistakes over and over. And it is easy to feel this same discouragement when supervising students in practicum who also seem to repeat behaviors with children that they know are inappropriate. A remark from my advisor helped to put this learning cycle in perspective, in a very encouraging way. It is one more benefit of this thesis process - an understanding that helps me stay patient with students. Learning to teach, learning to be with children, in ways that truly help even the most difficult of them, is a time-consuming, complex task:

Jean's comments were helpful - especially the ones that encouraged me to look back at all the repetitions: the same issues of sharing authority that I repeat from class to class to see how they differ. Am I seeing their complexities clearer each time around? This encourages me. That it's not just repeating the same mis-step over and over, but rather repeating a form of the mis-step and learning something more each time. Maybe it's the personal growth that keeps us optimistically teaching one course after another afresh, thinking "*This time I'll get it right.*" (Journal, January 11, 1997)

Another benefit seems to arise from after/class group discussions. When I explain why I made certain decisions, students have a chance to ask about some of the thinking, that goes on in my head, while I am teaching - a process that I rarely take the time in class to explain:

We talked about how much of a class is a judgment call by the teacher - what to spend time on, what to leave out. I changed the length of some mini-discussions from two minutes to one because that seemed long

enough. The after/class group, however, felt it was too short. A reminder to me of how engrained the teacher role is. I easily could have consulted the class on this and made a wiser decision....Discussed the format of the child project assignment and I'll share our clarifications with the class next week. I find this especially helpful. When assignments get clarified in the after/class group, I get some insight into what may not be clear enough for the whole class. Helps prevent misunderstandings. (Journal, January 18, 1997)

These open discussions, at the end of each class, have made me much more aware of the "hidden curriculum," that is, how much of what I do as a teacher models, for education students, a way of teaching. This may send a more powerful message about how to teach than the content does. Before I started this thesis process, modeling for students was just not something to which I gave much thought. I am sure I sent contradictory messages, as when I *talked* about the importance of learning through hands-on activities.

Surprised at how much students appreciate my writing the agenda for the evening on the board - something done offhandedly, simply because I remembered doing it in grade one and thought it might serve as a model of practice for future teachers. On that note - surprised when C. asked about my methods of getting the class's attention. She commented that I just start the video or start talking quietly and everyone soon starts paying attention. She wondered if I did that as a deliberate strategy. Said that her current practicum teacher yells to get attention and she dislikes that method. Her comment reminded me how automatic this strategy has become for me. I don't ever think about it and was surprised by her comments. I remember that at one time it *was* very deliberate, when I found getting the attention of a class full of children a real challenge. Her comments brought home to me that old "saw" that we teach so much, unaware of what students are really learning - and how important it is to teach in a way that models good practice. (Journal, January 23, 1997)

At the end of January, 1997, I mention something that I have forgotten to do in the intervening year. I found that one benefit of reading and re-reading my journal over the past four years is being reminded, from time to time, of a good idea that I had completely forgotten. One that I want to put to use now is mentioned in this excerpt:

I need to get into the habit of asking *why* someone thinks the way they do when they've made a statement. It's the perfect chance to show interest and clarify thinking - mine a vein more deeply. Rather than stories of what we instructors do in certain situations, maybe we need more of students sharing their ideas, bouncing them off other students. The

instructor role can be more one of setting guidelines, asking why, to encourage reasons for opinions and introducing alternatives for discussion, but refraining from saying, "This is the best way." (Journal, January 30, 1997)

My courses that started this past January, 1998, had one cohort of early childhood students who were all running programs for children in our community while completing their ECD diplomas together. I was especially interested in making my courses meaningful in their everyday lives with children.

The group seemed very pleased that we worked over the course outline draft together and that I'm not "piling on" the work. I think our diploma program should help them in the job they are currently doing with families, not make their lives more difficult. They already have "assignments" in their day to day interactions, so I've left the project design up to each person to fit into what they're doing in their work. I was so busy explaining the possibilities to the diploma students, that I did forget two things:

1. to ask first what they were hoping to get out of my courses
2. to do an after/class evaluation group

Since we don't meet for two more weeks, I'll phone each one and get a sense of how she feels things are shaping up so far. (Journal, January 18, 1998)

I think that taking courses while running a program is one of the best ways to make the connections between theory and practice. It certainly is working for me in my thesis process. I want to make sure that my courses address their daily issues and that our class becomes a support group for each other. With this in mind, shifting authority can continue to happen since they will have a big part in shaping how we spend our time together. Making one-to-one personal phone calls or visits part of the course is one way to keep me in tune with what they each see as important. I am going into this semester with a much keener awareness that what I do with them models what I would like them to do with children and families:

.... how much I realize that the way I teach is modeling what I'd like students to do with their children and families. So I see quite clearly that when I keep checking to see if what we're doing in class is what they find helpful, I set a model for what I would like them to be doing with parents - and with the children in their care - keep checking. (Journal, January 21, 1998)

I plan to continue the after/class sessions with this group. Since we are a small group, I think I will set aside the last fifteen minutes of every class and have us all participate. I find I am much more concerned about making my courses relevant than I have been in the past and much more likely to keep up the conversations that ensure this.

We've met once and I forgot to do the after/class group discussion. What I've started to do is to phone each person in between our on-campus sessions - to see how the course is going for them and to talk about whatever their current issues are on the job. Some of the official course hours can include these one-on-one conversations, small study groups, workshops or conferences, program advisory committees and Family Network meetings. All these venues are places to engage in early childhood discussions that clarify their own commitments and I think that's as valid as being in discussions directed by me. They'll be documenting these experiences and writing about them in their journals. (Journal, January 27, 1998)

One of the biggest challenges for our students is communicating with parents, especially when there are concerns. I am hoping that by sharing authority in our classroom, they will feel more comfortable with sharing their authority with children and families. Their project for my courses involves improving their communication with a family of a challenging child, as described in this entry:

....it is often the family of a misbehaving child that they most want to talk to. So the project concentrates also on getting better at communicating with a "challenging child." Interesting how critical communication skills are in both these instances. I do think active listening is the key - and I know how hard that is to do. Even as they describe their struggles, I want so much to make suggestions or explain what I think is happening (and I can't resist and sometimes do), but I'm really struggling to JUST LISTEN and trust that they can figure out their own problems. I need to do this in order to model for them the active listening that they can do to be helpful to children, who act out of unhappiness and to parents, who act out of stress. (Journal, January 27, 1998)

My last journal entry for January, 1998, refers to my second class with the diploma students. Remembering to do an after/class discussion proved very helpful in guiding our planning of the next session.

Being mindful of some of the comments from the last group of diploma students, I'm trying to give more choices as we go along - proposing two or three things we could do next and seeing which they think would be more helpful...Good feedback from after/class group - their strongest

interest was in talking - as a whole group - about their daily challenges - connecting the course and readings to those daily challenges - and active listening the person speaking.

I decided to try what seemed to work well last semester in practicum seminar - combining an opportunity for each student to tell about their experiences with children, while we all active listened. Being able to listen is one of the most helpful things they can do for children, for parents, for colleagues - and in their own families - and yet I know from personal experiences how very difficult this is. We immediately want to be helpful with commiseration and sympathy and solutions - none of which really respect that the person is trying to think through a dilemma and just needs someone to listen so that they can articulate and solve it themselves. The situations they describe, as they work with children and families, are always very complex and involve many variables that only they are aware of - so there's no way that someone else can tell them what to do. (Journal, January 31, 1998)

In our after/class discussion that day, the students reminded me that they did not find reviewing the assigned readings as helpful as discussing the issues they face in their centres daily and relating the readings to their situations. It seems that respecting what the adult student already knows, listening carefully to what each has to say, is a watermark for my shifting authority.

I was quite pleased that when I asked what was the thing we did during the afternoon that they found most helpful, they said the active listening. A couple students, with teenagers at home, kept saying - "and this really works with teens!" (Journal, January 31, 1998)

As I began this semester in 1998, I had given no thought to my shifting authority as a *model* for my students. That understanding appeared in the writing, and I see it now as so obvious. If I want students to listen to children and their families and value what is said, the strongest way to convey this understanding is to have them experience it with me. And this experiencing happens as my authority shifts and we become learners together.

In **February**, 1996, my journal comments reflect my sorting out my place in the classroom as I learn to share more of my authority. The choices I make as an instructor, to talk or to be silent ("take notes"), seem to weave in and out of the students' need to articulate responses in order to know what they know. This 1996 entry describes me directing whole group discussion and just beginning to notice the difference when I share the "directing" authority:

Realized when I recognized W. in the whole class discussion, that another student had started to talk at the same time. I could have called on her as easily as on W. as the other student rarely speaks. I could have encouraged both to speak. I really like the quieter student and want to encourage her contributions. Did I lean toward W. because she's usually more articulate? I seem to still be repeating myself lots. Could make my point in fewer words....Really enjoyed my "just listening" role. I thought students did wonderfully at carrying on thoughtful discussion themselves while I was "taking notes." (Journal, February 9, 1996)

Now, in 1998, calling on students is no longer a concern in group discussions where we are all learners. The next journal entry includes student comments about my "note-taking-to-keep-quiet" strategy:

Conducted an informal in-class evaluation of the course so far. They seemed to like my writing and listening strategy. One student's comment: "It lets us throw out our ideas before you threw out yours." Unexpected positive comments on lack of stress in class - caring, comfortable voice (really pleased to hear). (Journal, February 9, 1996)

Students reminded me that some of the videocases I show are quite emotional and touch personal chords, so that discussion right away is too difficult for some. They suggested a quiet writing time first, before discussion begins:

At end of class one student reminded me that emotional cases need some quiet writing and reflecting time before the class jumps into discussion groups. Some topics are very sensitive for some students. I'd completely forgotten the written response first part. How could I forget something we'd been doing for two years or more!

When I look down and "take notes," large group discussion really seems to take off. I notice when I throw in my own stories, the class seems attentive - "the power of stories." I could curb the amount of stories I tell as I'm still talking quite a lot. (Journal, February 16, 1996)

I have noticed that one article (or case) can initiate a wide variety of discussion responses. In the past this would usually signal to me that groups were getting off topic and I would expend a lot of energy ensuring that they stay on topic. However, as my authority gradually shifts, and I think more about how people learn, what I consider "off topic" has changed, as reflected in this next entry:

As they talked about the videocase and wrote in their journals, it seemed that each came from perspectives that reflected their own life issues - what at present is uppermost in their own life puzzle.

So while we teachers present material that we think is addressing certain course content, the student response is often to make a connection with some issue that's pressing in their own life - and then concentrate on what's closest to their own personal struggles with children. I noticed this in our graduate classes as well. It's not that a person goes off on an unrelated topic, but that the class material connects with something personal that's related and the student uses the group to help her explore an unresolved personal issue relating to teaching in some way. A casual listener might conclude that a group is "off topic," when perhaps this is exactly what we want students, who are preparing to work with children, to do. (Journal, February 27, 1996)

In the graduate classes I took, as in the classes I teach, I also observed students getting off topic. As my authority in the classroom shifts, my perspective on this issue is shifting too - especially when I am patient and see where these off topics lead to. My next journal entry in 1996 refers to one incident that got me thinking about this:

Acknowledging complexity, rather than the "right" answers of the "expert," or insisting that everyone discuss what I want them to discuss, is one of my personal struggles as I move from center stage.

This reminded me of a small group discussion [about an article that we had read] in Jean's class with three young teachers. There was little response in this group to the article itself, but rather they discussed the stresses impacting on their own teaching - whether to even stay in teaching. Once or twice I attempted to make connections between our conversation and the article, without success. What was of importance to them was talking about what they were doing with children.

A good reminder to me not to always expect "on-task" behavior - sometimes other matters are more important. Teachers need to talk about what they're currently interested in and thinking through, even at the graduate level. I noticed that one group, not working directly with children this year, was more able to focus on the article and reflect on teaching from a distance. (Journal, February 27, 1996)

Courses that I have taken with Jean have changed the way I think about curriculum and the way I teach. I have heard others make this same remark, although none of us can quite figure out how she does this. One incident in her class highlighted this mystery for me. At one point, Jean was about to say something - to move us on to the next topic, I think - and one student, very engrossed in what the previous person had said, interrupted her by saying, "Just a minute," and proceeded to say what was on her mind. The student was so engrossed that she did not even seem to realize what she had done.

Jean's humorous observation: "It's no longer my class," seemed to describe what happens when discussion continues with an intensity and interest that subsumes the facilitator. (Journal, February 27, 1996)

While at university, I participated in "round tables" at the Teachers' Centre, where graduate students took turns giving updates on their research progress and asked for comments and questions from the rest of us to help them think through their writing. The dynamics were very much like that of an intensely interesting class when the presentation is over and group discussion begins. Even in this setting, it was obvious that each of us was focused more on her own learning than on that of the presenter:

Each of our questions and comments had more to do with what each of us struggles with in education or at work, rather than with what the researcher was presenting and seeking help with. Even Jean was reflecting on how she is thinking of research and its meaning in the big picture. I asked about my current struggle with the use of journals as data in writing up a thesis. Most of what I heard could be traced to each person's research issues. We all seemed busy constructing our own knowledge. Some resonated for the researcher as she responded with a question or comment. Other comments didn't noticeably connect.

If this is how people learn - how we teachers know what we know - what does this say about the teacher's place in the classroom? How do teachers promote learning by supporting this process? If this is a basic principle of learning, then why wouldn't the same principle apply for children, for any age student? Allow the learner to "play." As Jean often says in class, "Let's just play with ideas" - new insights, new understandings, new learnings. (Journal, February 27, 1996)

In February, 1997, my entries often centered around comments from the after/class groups. I did not realize how powerful an influence on my teaching they would become. Meeting regularly seemed to build a trust that resulted in a comfortable conversation among learners, where no one (including me) felt defensive. These groups have been amazingly helpful in keeping me awake to what is happening in my classes. What I began somewhat reluctantly, I now see as an indispensable part of my teaching. For instance, a comment in the following entry, by an education student, reminded me that what the students expect when they sign up for a course may be quite different than what I had planned to provide.

One student in my education class asks, "When are we going to get to school-aged children?" Even though I consciously compressed and omitted some of the opening chapters of the child development text, the relevance of prenatal / infancy / preschool is still remote for some

students. Seemed that older students - those who were mothers - could make the connections more easily. The next time I do this course, I think I'll experiment with a *flashback* approach: Start with school age and adolescence; then flash back to those sections of early development that help explain the current behavior they're seeing in children. Although I find all of child development fascinating and important and linked, that view just isn't shared by all, and if I want any of it to "stick," I'll have to listen to what *they* think is important. (Journal, February 10, 1997)

A little bit of my "old self" surfaces in the next entry about consulting students as my authority shifts. Fortunately, I recognize it even as write:

Frankly, if I weren't so recently a student myself, I'd really resent this needing to check with the students. After all, "I'm the teacher!" I feel that in my gut, but as soon as I voice it, I realize how ridiculous and ineffective it is - for a teacher - for a parent - for any kind of "boss." (Journal, February 10, 1997)

One night, when class ended quite late, I remember wondering if we had the energy for an after/class discussion, and how easy it would be to skip it just this once. The following entry reminds me that students often see things differently:

Last night when I called the after/class group together, I was thinking that there wouldn't be too much to say - all of us seemed so tired. This morning I awoke thinking of all I've noticed, that would have slipped my attention without that group:

Twice in our review of that night's class, the group began discussing the case on attachment we had covered and I realized I hadn't given enough time for discussion of it in class. In fact, I'd *completely forgotten* to allow discussion time at all after the last segment! It was toward the end of the night and I'd reverted back to an old habit of years ago - showing a tape, having a bit of discussion between students and myself and moving on to the next thing. I can't believe I did this! The discussion in the after/class group heated up about this video. There was lots evidently to still say and they asked to see the tail end of the tape (that I'd omitted to save time) and to finish the discussion in the next class, two weeks from now. All this surprised me. I'd rewound the tape thinking, "It's close to the end; that's enough of that."

I guess it points to that old habit of being the teacher and making decisions for the group without consulting. I thought I was past that and here it is cropping up again. I should be discouraged, but I'm more stunned than anything. (Journal, February 14, 1997)

The next journal entry for 1997 again refers to a video I show every year, in which professionals in Toronto work with families in a program called *Watch, Wait and*

Wonder. Although I had seen this video many times, this was the first time I appreciated the wonderful modeling that the consulting professionals were doing for us and for parents:

One reason I like this videocase is that it resonates with my own struggles in teaching. The professionals in it listen lots and respond with well-placed questions and comments. They guide rather than insist, trying to lead the parents to come to their own understandings. This parallels how I see myself when I'm most effective - listening, guiding, allowing students to make their *own* connections, knowing that these are the ones that will stick and really help make a difference.

Wow! I've seen this tape at least six or eight times, but this is the first time I made the parallel - the professionals on the tape did not share any of their own stories, but concentrated on the parents and their struggles. I need to do this more. Another shift - there is such precious little time together before my students are working with children and last night I fell back into old habits like a comfortable pair of slippers. I did a "Jessie O'Malley" without even realizing it. I told a bunch of my own stories at a time when I needed to allow them to tell theirs. Jesse told wonderful stories, but I sure didn't learn much French in her classes. I'm beginning to appreciate how powerful the classroom models I've had are. Jessie was everyone's favorite teacher, but I realize now that we as a class served her purposes rather than our own - and I don't want to do that. (Journal, February 14, 1997)

Students need to learn from their own stories. I remember a student remarking once that a teacher was using the class for her own "therapy." I think we do this sometimes. As I write about the same habits I want to change - over and over - I sometimes wonder if I *can* change - is my teaching style too engrained? It has certainly made me more patient with students who sometimes take a long time to discover the ways in which they could be more helpful to children. Some things are just very difficult to see.

I'm often in such a hurry to "get through" all the stuff I've planned, that some important things get shortchanged. I still need to do a better balance of this and let some things go. For me, writing it down seems to be the way to create new channels in my brain for making changes, otherwise I'm back in old ruts and I don't even realize it until it's over.

This whole process of changing some of my old habits has made me much more patient with the teachers and students I observe in centres doing outmoded things when I know they know better. It takes a long time, and deliberate effort, to do things differently - even with the best of intentions and understanding. (Journal, February 14, 1997)

As I write this, I am beginning to understand how little preservice courses actually prepare teachers. This thesis process has been a four-year "in-service" of sorts, and I find my teaching gradually improving. A combination of study and practice seems more effective in promoting self-reflection and change.

I began to notice more clearly, in February, 1997, that how a teacher responds to a student's contribution in a class discussion, really does become a subtle evaluation of sorts. Her response can convey the notion that some students' contributions are more valuable than others:

I realize now that when all remarks are addressed to the instructor, then the response, whatever it is, is an evaluation. If I follow up and make a big deal about a response, the student can assume that she's said something of importance. If I were to merely nod in agreement or say something briefly, the student might assume that her comment was o.k. but not noteworthy of further discussion. If I give no response, a student could feel that what she's said has not contributed much to the discussion or that I disagree. When I remove myself from the discussion and become the scribe, then no one's comments get evaluated by me. Responses from peers can indicate whether a chord's been struck or not, but a sense of evaluation is not a strong part of the dynamics. I need to remember to get back to doing more of it this way. (Journal, February 14, 1997)

Deciding how much time is spent on what topic is one of my biggest challenges, as there is so much of importance to address in child development. When authority shifts, who decides that a discussion on one topic has gone on long enough and that it is time to move on to another, just as important, that also needs to be addressed? The next 1997 journal excerpt refers to a moment when the students and I had different perspectives on this.

Interesting that my reading of a children's book, *William's Doll* (Zolotow, 1985), left them with the feeling of needing more discussion time. I allowed a few minutes for comment in large group and then moved on to the next topic. I see the readings as a nice way to ease into the afternoon - share a few thoughts - but not as motivation for a major discussion. It's not what I planned!

So - there I am with what's a dilemma in any class - how much time gets allotted to what, by whom? The question of authority is a complex one in some situations. The responsibility to allow students to encounter and think about the main issues of child development, needed as background for working with children, weighs heavily on the teacher. How to decide what is important discussion that needs to continue and

what is interesting, but not as important as other possibilities? I could become more sensitive and give more timing choice to the group, but the dilemma - at some point - will always be there. I'm hired to guide this process so sometimes I need to guide - deciding when and how much is a built-in struggle. (Journal, February 20, 1997)

In February, 1998, as I was writing up my thesis draft and re-reading all my journal entries from past Februarys, I began to think that my shifting authority has perhaps not shifted enough. A conversation I had that month with a former student had me thinking more deeply about what authority in the classroom really means when preparing students for the "real world" of working with children. I could perhaps include panels of former graduates in my classes or perhaps the second term of classes needs to be done on-site as students take real jobs so that the courses, instructors, fellow students can help one another out, similar to the way in which we run the diploma program.

As I was walking the dogs in the woods today I was thinking about my conversation with a former student. She said she wasn't taking any practicum students for us because she didn't think she would be a good model of what we want our students to see! She also said that she found the problem-solving and other behavior management strategies just didn't work and she had to use some "non-ECD" stuff to get the kids under control. She said some of the parents were unhappy with her approach at first, but now that they see how it works, they're happy with what she's doing and there is a waiting list for her program. Oh dear. She was a bright, hard working student - really caring about kids - always open and honest - easy to talk to - as she still is.

So - what am I to think about her frank comments? Perhaps it means that our certificate program needs further re-design. Perhaps the first semester - like this past fall - works well in that students get through English and get to know each other as a cohort and get to see our college preschool program run in a developmentally appropriate way.

And then, maybe, the second semester should be on-the-job training. They could start working somewhere at a job in the "real world" and our program would help them do that. Why are we following the teacher education model of pre-service training when we know that doesn't work well! By second semester, all would still be full time students (for funding purposes), but also job-sharing or working half time and the courses could be incorporated into their workplace and supplemented by workshops and conferences and study groups. Together times would address the very difficult challenges they have as brand new teachers of young children. (Journal, February 3, 1998)

In the next journal excerpt from February, 1998, I find I am much more aware of the modeling for teaching that I do in the classroom. The diploma students had been saying

how difficult it was for them to tell parents something that might be taken as critical. To give them some practice, I asked groups of three to each send me an "I" message, on the critical side, about my teaching or the program.

We had the after/class group - and we reviewed each segment of the afternoon - got some suggestions - like show the video earlier when they're not so tired - have cookies.... I thought I wasn't getting the nitty gritty - so I tried an exercise that I think helped me quite a bit. I told them that I noticed in their journals that one of the hardest things they find is to tell a supervisor or a parent something that they're unhappy with. So I suggested they begin with me. In groups of three, each had to give me a real "I" message about something that would make me a better teacher for them - make the class a better learning experience for them - before they could leave. Got back feedback that didn't surface in the after/class discussion:

1. dislike having the class dates changed once they have been set
2. worried about having to do a full 60 hours in alternative ways
3. very uncertain about the project and what's required

Very helpful as I didn't realize these were bugging people - so I'll make sure we come back to these as a group when we meet next time. (Journal, February 14, 1998)

As I read the last entry for February, 1998, I noticed that, as hard as I am trying, there are still "pockets" of myself as the expert, not sharing authority. I realize as I read this that although we have all agreed that active listening real concerns is most helpful, I have not really consulted with them on how we go about doing that. I have been automatically doing my "teacher thing" - correcting mistakes without checking to make sure that someone besides me considers this helpful.

I wonder if I overdo the active listening thing - when someone throws in a question or their advice or their own story, I'll label the roadblock in order to keep us all in listening mode. I think, as I write this, that next time I'll ask ahead of time for their permission to do this, rather than assuming that they'll understand its importance. If they're reluctant to agree to it, maybe we'll spend some more time on the importance of active listening. I see these hard working women trying so hard to find the *answers* to what to do with challenging children - how to tell parents what to do - I want them to see that often there is no quick answer - we're not magicians - they don't need to feel put on the spot and mostly - they need to learn to trust that people can figure out their own problems.

One student is always asking, "What would you do?" in her journal and I often respond by saying, "Let's bring this to the group for

discussion." I think she gets a little frustrated because she thinks I'm the expert and should tell her what to do, and then she'll do it, and everything will be fine. Don't I wish! It just doesn't work that way - for me or for them. But listening - and allowing the speaker to figure out her own problem - *that* we can learn to do. So I'll keep at it. (Journal, February 21, 1998)

I think my first experience with "shifting" came when I took Jean's Summer Institute in 1994, although I did not recognize it at the time. I only knew that something was making me feel "uncomfortable." In my **March**, 1995 journal, I reflected on this feeling and on that seminar from the previous summer:

Reading a collection of essays (Witherell and Noddings, 1991) has helped clarify some of the process going on this past summer in Jean's course. I feel so slow to catch on sometimes - or is it that we make assumptions that something is easily understood and don't realize that it's a "leap of faith" for people when they've been used to a very different mind set....I felt like I was plunged into Jean's course without any roadmap, while other students, more familiar with Jean's teaching, understood from the first, what the course was about.

I struggled with figuring out the "shifted ground," as it was remarkably different from the more competitive, academic courses I do well in. The essays helped me realize the course design Jean was using was more self-exploration than idea sharing. For me that puts a whole different "spin" on how to approach a course. I wish I'd known before I started and wonder why I couldn't catch on sooner. And why does it keep tugging at the back of my mind - why can't I just let it go? (Journal, March 15, 1995)

In March of the following year, 1996, being the expert in the classroom still seemed to be the issue as I reflect on a class discussion on teen prostitution:

One student stated that a fourteen-year-old can be responsible for her role in sex, under the law. I argued that no fourteen-year-old could possibly understand the long-term consequences of her action - that it's not a "free" choice at that age. Realize now that I should have thrown that open for group response. Instead, I assumed the role of the "expert" again - stating my opinion as *the* opinion on the subject. (I think it *is* the opinion, but forgot that my stating it doesn't make it automatically everyone else's. When will I learn! (Journal, March 7, 1996)

In March, 1996, I was taking a curriculum course with Jean and wondering how her course was able to really get at the heart of "curriculum," without her giving little

lectures on its definition and I was trying to figure out how her modeling was affecting my thoughts on myself as teacher. My following journal comment reflects a discussion I had with other students in that course and how we saw her "teaching curriculum."

When does the teacher share her expertise? If Jean had given a little lecture on what curriculum is, might that not have defeated the whole point of what curriculum is - that is, her powerful statement of curriculum as "what is structured between teacher and student." If she spoke wouldn't that really say: this process is all fine and good, but what I have to say is *really* important. Wouldn't this undermine the trust that curriculum knowledge gets constructed by the individual, by the group. Isn't *not* saying it a powerful statement of belief - and saying it would contradict the heart of that belief? (Journal, March 26, 1996)

I am only now, two years later, beginning to understand her notion of curriculum "in my bones," and to understand how profoundly *experiencing* it in her classes has affected how I view curriculum in my classes. In March, 1997, my entries seemed to focus on how students learn best, on their need to articulate in speaking and writing to help them do the thinking that leads to action. My comments also reflect how much I am learning about myself as teacher from the comments of the after/class group. From time to time my "teacher voice" still asserts itself and I am reminded how difficult it is to switch from being the sole authority in the classroom to sharing that authority and becoming one of the learners. An excerpt from my first entry for that month reflects on a lost opportunity for sharing authority and I wonder now, if I had remained in the shared authority spirit, where that discussion might have led us.

Laura's need to talk about the on-going bullying at her school bus stop and her efforts to bring the "offenders" to justice has got me thinking. Our after/class group runs from 10:00 - 10:30 PM and everyone is tired, but I've noticed that this group seems to spend more time on personal issues / concerns than on reviewing how the class went and suggesting changes. This seems to indicate that I may not be allowing enough time for personal connections, such as Laura's, to be brought up in class. Laura is a non-stop talker, bless her heart, but she's also a caring, committed professional. Some of this talking may reflect a need for "group therapy," but some I feel reflects her genuine need to sort out issues. As she doesn't monopolize class time, she's obviously aware and considerate. I think she's expressing a genuine need to articulate in order to figure out. If I directed the after/class process and kept the group "on topic" (as one student suggested), then what students really think and are concerned with, might not appear....It just seems foolish to say, "We don't have time for the real world"....So, rather than brush aside Laura's concern, perhaps this could be made a focal point in class discussion and

we could brainstorm the principles that apply in similar situations. This journal really helps me think this through. (Journal, March 1, 1997)

My "taking notes" seems to have worked as a strategy to reduce my voice in the classroom and to share that space with students. The differences between students that have been guided into student-to-student group discussion and those who are new to it are quite noticeable:

I feel that I now have a different place in my child development classroom. For large group review of cases, discussion is open and I act as scribe. Students continuing from the first semester are now used to me and pretty much carry on the discussion without reference to me.

It's quite different in my education class that has just started with a group of new students. As I started to make notes on the board...it shifted, for me, from a discussion to a tell-the-teacher format. So I stopped and sat down and took my own notes. Board notes, I think, help highlight the issues and remind students of points they can elaborate on in their journals...But this may be just me still searching for my place - my purpose when authority is shared. My "so-what-do-I-do-now" bewilderment. (Journal, March 5, 1997)

In the next journal entry, I reflect on watching a videotape of my class from two days before. Video has helped me become more aware of cues that indicate shifting authority and how my perspective has changed. One of the cues seems to be who gets how much time to speak out of the classroom "time-pie." Shifting authority does not mean losing it - just sharing it.

Funny, when I'm giving my little mini-lectures (my comments on any important points I want to make sure that people think about), I often feel like I'm talking too much or that I'm rather boring. But as I watch myself on video I don't see that at all. I see a person sharing lots of good information, fairly well worded, in a personal style that's pretty interesting. In a way this videotaping helps to boost my self-confidence (a bit like becoming an observer of my disembodied self). I think I'll feel all right about continuing to add my two cents, keeping it in proportion to the rest of the learners in the class. My segment was under ten minutes, and I felt that was in good proportion to the other small and large group methods of digesting materials and articulating on the part of all the learners. (Journal, March 8, 1997)

In my 1997 journal entries I seem to be more aware of using students as resources for one another in a more consistent way, especially as college classes often attract students experienced in their fields.

...Could refer some of the questions from students to the two students that are in the class who have been working with children with special needs.... the sharing that one experienced student did on special needs lent a voice of authenticity, as she's now working in the school system. I just realized though, that another student didn't have a chance to voice an opinion, yet she's also a special needs aide. This giving voice to others to share learning also implies that some students need a space made. They don't always speak up and share what is often valuable information for the rest of us. I need to remind myself to be more aware of these resources. (Journal, March 8, 1997)

On occasion, when an after/class group had become very comfortable and trusting, I would videotape our discussion. As I watched one discussion on tape, I was struck by comments from two of the mature students and was glad they were in a form that allowed me to transcribe and think about them some more:

One student (commenting on a videocase) helps me think about time and "giving voice" to our ideas with this beautiful insight: *"Sometimes, you know, discussions start slowly because there's so much ...there's lots of emotion....you can't really just start talking about it... you really have to think about it for yourself... so it was a very emotional thing so it was taking longer for people to get it out."*

Another student, referring to the slides I showed from my past grade one classrooms, reminded me of the continuity of experience for me: *"I can see where it [our adult class] ties into how you had your classroom set up. Like when you said, 'Well, I'd do this right up until grade seven,' and I'm thinking that we're still doing it - just doing it in a different way...like here we are ... round tables.. we have our different centres and you have different things and I thought it's just great cause it's a good way to be taught...for anybody."* (Journal, March 8, 1997)

The after/class groups often make small suggestions that are unexpectedly helpful. I was surprised by the obvious when one student suggested pairing one of our readings with one videocase. She was right - they were a wonderfully complementary match - I just had not noticed it myself. Or when I erased the agenda as we completed each item - after all it was my agenda - right? Another small pocket of unshifted authority:

It's interesting how these after/class groups often articulate what I'm doing instinctively - without much reflection on what I'm doing - until they articulate it for me.

Some interesting comments on the use of an agenda that I've been writing on the board at the beginning of class. I've been erasing them, as

we do the items, to give me an indication of "what's left." These students requested that I leave the full agenda up on the board as it would help the after/class group remember what to comment on. Some also said they actually copy the agenda down as a reminder of topics for their journal writing during the week. I had no idea students were copying it down. Sometimes I wonder about my ability to see from other points of view. These students are so supportive and appreciative - I always leave feeling buoyed up. (Journal, March 8, 1997)

A discussion at lunch with fellow college instructors provoked the next journal reflection on the purpose of my thesis and that gnawing self-doubt that surfaces from time to time:

...sometimes I think that what I'm studying and commenting on is so obvious, how could it be considered research material. Yet I know, as I watch the teachers around me blaming students when things aren't working well, that what's become obvious to me is just not so in many classrooms. The comment from one colleague yesterday re why should instructors have to be evaluated by students year after year - haven't they already proven their worth? The question for me is more the obverse: Why wouldn't instructors want feedback - how else to improve? (Journal, March 13, 1997)

As I read my next March, 1997 journal entry, I am reminded that shifting authority in the classroom is so much easier in reflection, than in reality. In the next entry, I struggle with trying to shift back some of that shared authority and it gets rather messy in the process of balancing whose voice needs to be heard. Shifting authority still seems to imply that there are times when authority does *not* shift and it is very difficult to find a criterion for balancing authority with responsibility.

As a wrap-up, I said that I wanted to make a few points to consider when they respond to the case in their journals. When some students began to discuss the points, I interrupted and re-iterated that these were just points to consider as we'd already completed our allotted discussion time on this case and need to move on to other topics. After a bit, one student started to interrupt and I said something like, "I'd like to finish...." As soon as I said it, I felt uncomfortable....

My dilemma is this - the students don't know what else is on the teacher's agenda and since this cohort know each other well, their discussions can degenerate into bull sessions getting further and further from the information the classes were gathered to share in the first place. Now, the interrupting student is very bright and usually makes comments helpful to the process, but how can I fairly allow her contribution and not allow another's (about their dog last summer or something).

Sharing authority doesn't mean that students have it all and the teacher has none. If spaces are created for students to contribute their voices, then (in the spirit of sharing) space needs to be allowed for the teacher's voice - and at the end of a case I want to be able to share a few comments / questions to encourage further reflection without debating each thing I say. (Journal, March 20, 1997)

As I read over that last entry now, in 1998, I shake my head at the squabbling tone of the "expert" that I hear. I think I am more aware now that I am still the heavyweight in the group. I can afford to be more gracious and patient. Why be concerned about students who are so enthusiastic in my courses that they cannot keep quiet? This is a problem? I think that shifting authority implies that sometimes I just need to get out of the way and let the thinking roar by. I can always pick up the pieces and weave together the meaning after they hit the ditch. After all, I am still the teacher.

As a person who likes happy endings, I am tempted to leave out my last journal entry, April, 1998. We had missed a few weeks of classes, for various reasons, and I was surprised at how many old habits reared their ugly heads. They are such familiar companions that I did not recognize them until I wrote in my journal and watched them surface.

I don't feel good about the last class - not the usual charge of energy - no one saying, "Wow, that four hours went fast!" As I think back I realize I was tired from my travels - I was focused on what I wanted to share and although they told stories, we didn't get into the deep active listening that has served us well in the past. I think I fell into that old rut of talking too much - telling them what to think rather than commenting or just listening. I forgot all about my "saying so" not making believers of them. Reminds me of how it is with kids sometimes when they are tired - this reverting back to an earlier stage of development. I guess I went on automatic pilot. The only difference is now I realize what happened - even though I didn't realize it when I was into it. Darn! (Journal, April 18, 1998)

The remainder of my journal deals mostly with my developing relationship with students rather than my place in the classroom. Even after a lengthy break, I do not notice the same backsliding in my shifting relationship with students. Perhaps this knowledge, emotionally encoded as well as cognitively recognized, sticks better. This will be explored in more detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

THREAD #3: With Students - Shifting Relationships **September through April (1994 through 1998)**

As I read through all my past Septembers and Octobers in my journal, another thread that seemed to nudge its way out was my shifting place with students. As my authority as teacher shifted, it seemed to shift my relationship with students more than I anticipated. There is very little mention of my interacting with students in my 1994 and 1995 journals. Being a graduate student in 1995, as well as a teacher, seemed to have made me a more understanding person, one who is more sensitive to the responsibility of treating students as I would like to be treated myself. This first excerpt, from an **October**, 1995 journal, reflects on the experience of being a student myself, in graduate studies at university, while also teaching undergraduates:

I asked [the professor] if possibly next semester we could have some time to share drafts of our thesis proposals. The professor said something about having to see how it fit into the course - not sure if that would be an appropriate use of our time. Then another student spoke up and asked for some time to discuss methodologies / issues. I commented that today we had had some good group discussion on this. The professor then got angry and said something about that not being the purpose of the course. I think I said something about maybe we should talk about that. She raised her voice - looked right at me (not at the student who had initiated this) and declared, in no uncertain terms, that she would decide the purpose of the course - no discussion needed.

I didn't reply. I was too shocked to hear that tone of voice, with so little regard for the learner, from someone I expected to be an example of good practice. So many of my thesis readings encourage collaborative learning rather than autocratic control. I had assumed that teachers were receptive to suggestions from students.....Certainly a powerful lesson for me in terms of power and control in the classroom and what it's like to be on the student side of the fence.... guess I'll just have to derive some value from negative experiences. (Journal, October 30, 1995)

I find this incident continues to reverberate in my work with students and colleagues. The temptation to silence others, who do not agree, haunts most of us, I suspect. Whenever it waves its alluring tentacles at me, however, I now get an uneasy feeling. That kind of exercise of power (which seems all too familiar from my own past teaching) seems to be gradually leaching out of my interactions, as I struggle to share

the authority in the classroom. I sometimes worry that I may forget how insidious the voice of the teacher is in authoring the classroom story.

By 1996, individual students - their learning and their interactions with me - seemed to take up a much larger part of my journal reflections. As I read over this entry from October of that year, the issue of power and authority in the classroom seemed to still haunt me, but with the shoe now, unconsciously, on the other foot:

When I asked the group to take some time to write down their responses to our discussion, Morgan started reading instead. A protest? She had wanted to ask a question, but I had responded by saying that I wanted us to take five minutes for quiet writing and reflection. She noisily turned pages - better have a chat with her?...

Spoke with Morgan after the class about what she'd wanted to tell me. It was about duplicating stuff for a workshop, so I decided not to bring up her "attitude." She said she was having a bad day when she came in. When I saw her again at the end of the day, she said she was angry because she felt cut off and all she wanted to do was hand me a handout for xeroxing. Said I reminded her of her mother who often cut her off and refused to listen.

I explained my perspective of trying to keep the group on track in our limited amount of time...So, I'll need to be more patient and [lengthy description here, in my journal, of ways I could explain the time constraints I'm under to the group]. (Journal, October 7, 1996).

I realize now that all my remarks seem centered on why I acted the way I did, rather than on trying to get to the bottom of her responses. This impatience, that seemed to be linked to me wanting to do things my way, showed up again in the next entry of 1996, as I slowly began to be more sensitive to sharing the authority in the classroom:

I explained how to do an observation assignment a couple of times. George then asked me again how to do it. I said, "Could someone answer that?" Another student re-explained it. I noticed that George looked disgruntled and made a few side comments. I felt out of patience. I'll check the video of this class to see what my body language was conveying. I guess I thought anyone listening would have heard it the first two times and I wanted to get on with the meat of the class. On the other hand, impatience and offending students is not the kind of modeling I want to do for students.

George was still friendly after this, but I think I'll still mention my reaction to him and why I acted as I did...I think I should take time to explain to the class my responsibilities for "keeping us on track." (Journal, October 8, 1996)

As I write this, I realize his question was not the "personal" one I then thought it was. Others in the class might have benefited from hearing my response. This is an on-going dilemma for me, as someone has to be responsible for the interests of *all* the students, both the ones present and the students they will have in the future. When authority shifts, it gets bumpy assessing that responsibility (Pinnegar, 1998, personal communication).

As I viewed the video of myself from that class, I also looked for my nonverbal communications. I noticed how focused I can be on teaching, sometimes forgetting my responsibilities to the human beings that surround me:

...interesting - I watched the section where I didn't answer George - didn't look rude. Realize now he really wanted to know if he could do all twelve assignments on one child. Perhaps encourage / explain to students to bring *personal* questions to me after class? Sat next to Cary for most of class and rarely looked at or talked to her. I need to be more aware of attending to the person I'm near. How could I be so "unfriendly"! Need to do something about this - too intense on teaching. Never would have been aware of this except by viewing a video of myself teaching. (Journal, October 9, 1996)

Later that month I still seemed to have difficulty with student questions. Why do I find them annoying when anyone would say that answering questions is one of any teacher's main tasks!

Jackie asked me a quick question right before I was starting class - can't remember it exactly but something like "What's required to get an 'A' in this course?" My short quip was something like "An 'A' student would be able to figure that out." I hadn't meant to be snippy. I was in a hurry, but Jackie (bless her heart) called me on it and said she was offended by my response. That brought me up short, as I hadn't meant to insult. She graciously assured me she was sure I hadn't meant to and I thanked her for helping me with this self-awareness thing. (Journal, October 26, 1996)

Now I realize the need to be more aware of answering all questions whenever they come up, even if I am in the middle of something. By and large I have found that these "interruptions" usually reflect concerns that others in the class have, and addressing them prevents grief down the road. Besides, it creates a more open atmosphere - another way of sharing authority. Who am I to decide which questions can be asked and which cannot? If authority is shared then that means the teacher is not the sole judge of

what questions can be asked and when they can be asked. It is so obvious, yet I missed all this up until now. Would I even be aware that this is one thing I would like to "fix" if I had not been doing this journal right now? Reflecting in writing on a day's practice (or a week's) gives insight that just is not possible in the thick of things.

In October, 1997, I reflect on an incident involving a group of students interrupting our class. It seems that at the beginning of each year, it takes a while to lay down some ground rules for what is expected and what makes for respectful interactions. I do this every year so I find it interesting that this is the first year I have written about it. I wonder if up to now I just "laid down the law," and did not even think about the ways that I did that or if this group is one that is particularly lax?

I was annoyed by seven students who came in twenty minutes late and nonchalantly interrupted class. They came in two groups, so interrupted the discussion twice. I met with this group after class to share how I was feeling and to give them a chance to present their points of view. I think we've established a strong enough bond this year that I don't feel this "conflict" will carry on as we continue to work together. We'll see.

As I watch this "coming in late" sequence on videotape, I remember the point at which I felt a real wave of anger at the latecomers who interrupted. Some carried on side comments while the students who were in the discussion were trying to stay focused. I was really surprised that my anger doesn't show on my face. I'd always thought my face was an open book, so I'm surprised that I'm able to keep that professional look, even when churning inside. I remember, as I watched the tape, that inside I'd completely lost track of what I wanted the class to do next. Trying to figure out why all seven would come late together as a group - this is practically half the class and I was worried about its significance. Other than repeating myself, the amount of anger I had right then isn't visible. Talking about it at the end of class with this group was probably a good idea, because it's possible that they wouldn't even know I was upset. (Journal, October 15, 1997)

Students coming late to class is a recurring issue for teachers - and one for me as I think back to past years. However, I have never taken the time to reflect on it in a journal, so I think I keep responding with anger. I wonder, as I think this through and try to be a model of how I would like them to respond as teachers in similar situations, if I can treat it matter-of-factly, as a part of the learning that we are doing together. Recently I was talking with a student who was quite angry at the parents in her program for not living up to her expectations. I realize she (and I) need to change our expectations of total

cooperation and recognize that *how* we negotiate to do things is also part of the learning experience. The next journal entry reflects on more annoyances from this same group of tardy students as recorded on videotape:

As I was giving directions for an activity, I stopped talking in the middle of what I was saying as some of the ones who had come in late were again carrying on their own conversations and not listening. As I watch myself pause, my face looks neutral, although I remember being really annoyed inside. I'm so glad to find out that I don't let these annoyances show - especially as I think some of them are petty and have more to do with my own sense of needing respect, or needing to be acknowledged. (Journal, October 15, 1997)

As I write about this entry, in 1998, I am reminded of how often a problem I see as residing in students is more often a dilemma of how to meet my own responsibilities while sharing authority. As I read and re-read the next excerpt, I remember how easy it is to revert to old habits when I am under stress. In this entry, I am upset and there is no shifting authority or shifting relationships here:

After more side conversations by these same individuals during whole group discussion, I remember feeling that I'd "had it" and went into "giving them a lecture" about respect - for classmates and for me. My face doesn't look angry, but my tone of voice is serious and I finally had everyone's attention - dead silence in the room - even the camera person held the camera steady! Also realized as I watched this that the same people also came back late from break! I think this was the straw that broke this camel.

I think I did a good job of sticking to "I" messages and I noticed on the video that it lasted one and a half minutes, which I think was an appropriate amount of time to give it. I suspect the whole thing bothered me a lot more than it bothered anyone else, which makes me wonder why I have so much internal turmoil over expressing my feelings on things that upset me. I think part of the distraction comes from wondering if I've responded appropriately. Many of these students are fresh out of high school and I'm not sure they do take the course (or education in general) seriously and maybe they do need a pep talk now and then on what's expected at the college level. (Journal, October 15, 1997).

These entries from October of 1997 help me realize how difficult it is to shift authority in the classroom consistently, on an emotional plain as well as an academic one, as I juggle the contradictions of responsibility and authority. As Ira Shor (1992, p.165) puts it, "I want to democratize learning but I do not stop being an authority in the classroom. My authority changes." I am used to being deferred to, paid attention to as a teacher, as

a person. I do not want to be treated with the same lack of respect some show for one another; I want all of us treated with the same respect and consideration. I think now that this is the very stuff curriculum is made of.

Shifting authority in the class would mean that we would all take responsibility for interruptions and address them as a group, rather than expect that this is "the teacher's problem." I am finding that the notion of shifting authority has to seep into the bones (theirs as well as mine) and that takes time. Old habits ambush me, when I least expect, and it is only through the writing that I do now, that my bones start to absorb.

As I talked after class with the latecomers, their explanations helped a little and I sure felt better sending my "I" messages. One student said she felt like she was back in high school. It could all be a sign that it's still *my* class - so I'm the one reacting. I wonder how it might have gone if we'd just stopped when everyone came in and discussed it as a group. I didn't want to waste class time, but perhaps that should have been *their* decision, as a class, rather than solely my decision. I'll need to think about that some more. Punctuality is such a big thing in this field - where children are waiting and everyone's expected to be on time.

During our after/class group, one student voiced the opinion that when latecomers enter noisily, the whole flow of discussion stops and we lose our momentum. It was reassuring to hear this voiced by someone else. (Journal, October 15, 1997)

When incidents like this catch me off guard, there is not much time to think of an appropriate response. I am learning that it is sometimes better not to respond than to do so inappropriately. Meeting with the late students after class gave me a bit of thinking time. Allison Tom (1997) addresses these issues when she talks about the *deliberate relationship* between teacher and student:

In the deliberate relationship, there is a pause between the experience of an impulse and its expression. In that pause, however brief, we interrogate the impulse: Does it serve the long-term obligations of the relationship? If the answer is No, we refrain. In this way, the thoughts and feelings expressed in the deliberate relationship are both genuine and controlled. Learning to be deliberate in relationship requires learning to pause, to ask, and then to act responsibly. (p.12)

I hope I am beginning to pause, to honor the deliberateness needed in a classroom where my authority is shifting and I am struggling to establish new ground. This pausing to

consider the effect of my responses on the long-term relationship is an important modeling I would like to provide for my students as they work with children and families. Tom (1997) encourages teachers to bring student behaviors up for discussion in the classroom. She describes the "transparent practice" of the "deliberate relationship":

A second frequent manifestation of transparency includes establishing explicit rules for classroom behavior. Teachers' establishment of ground rules for classroom behavior moves previously unconscious or hidden norms of interaction to the front of students' and teachers' awareness; it makes them suitable topics for conversation. (p.17)

All this is a good reminder that as I struggle to shift the authority in the classroom, what happens with students, as well as what happens with curriculum, shifts too. As we share the authority, we also share the responsibility.

There is very little mention of my interactions with students in November and December of 1994 and 1995. In those first two years of my study, I seemed to be concentrating on how to use case-based instruction and how my authority was shifting in the classroom, without realizing the impact it would have on my personal interactions with students. However, by **November** of last year (1996), my journal comments were strongly flavored by the research on teaching that I was reading and by my efforts to figure out just how students learn child development in a way that will influence their interactions with children. The more I concentrated on my courses from the students' point of view, the more I appreciated the emotional impact of my teaching on them:

I'm noticing that there are more students expressing positive things about my courses than I remember from the past. One certificate student said she appreciated my willingness to listen to student concerns. Another student commented in a class discussion, "You're our hero," when they were talking about the program as a whole.

However, there always seem to be some students unhappy with any individual teacher and her style. I did talk to one of my students who had expressed concerns about my class to someone else. She told me that she's been under a lot of stress at home and at school and was just venting. No suggestions or specific complaints. As I write this, it reminds me to just check with her once in a while to see how she's doing. (Journal, November 11, 1996).

By the end of the year, I realized that this student was having some serious problems within her own family. Learning that reminded me to pay more attention when a

student "vents." It can sometimes be more a reflection of personal stress than dissatisfaction with the course. How quick I am to go on the defensive and take this type of response as a criticism of my teaching. It is easy to "read" a student wrong when I do not take the time to have a trusting conversation with someone who appears stressed.

The next entry in my journal describes a pivotal moment in this whole thesis process for me, one that continues to reverberate throughout my teaching:

Now comes one of those surprises in life - one of those things I'd rather not write about. In response to sharing the November 1 section of my journal with the class, Morgan replied by sharing, in her journal, a memory of me as her teacher 15 years ago, when an insensitive comment of mine discouraged her so much that she dropped out of school.
(Journal, November 30, 1996)

The note this student sent me was such a powerful one that I keep it on my desk and re-read it from time to time to remind myself of who I am and what I am doing. With her permission, I have enclosed Morgan's letter:

November 18, 1996

Dear JoAnn:

As I sit here at the computer trying to put together a final letter of reflection, all of the things that I wanted to say seem to just go right from my head. I just realized that for the first time in my career in Early Childhood, this may be the last time that I have a chance to say my piece.

This incident may perhaps be irrelevant to you, you may not even remember the incident but I feel that it is necessary to share with you for my own sense of closure. I guess I can do this now, especially after you shared a piece of yourself that I have never seen last week when you gave us your reflection to read.

When I left college and our community, I went to join in the diploma program at another college. At that point in my life, I felt that you were the person who had a large influence on who I was, in essence a sort of a mentor for me. I went to the new college with a whole load of knowledge, love and commitment for the field and anticipation of a successful future. Instead, I encountered physical abuse, mistrust, and a blow to my self-esteem/confidence that I feel I am still probably wearing the effects of. Besides the abuse from my spouse, I felt that my strongest asset was who I

was in the lives of children. I loved, nurtured and gave completely all of who I was to my job, and the children that I worked with.

I distinctly remember the phone call from you at college one afternoon. It was along the lines that you had been contacted by my practicum supervisor who said I was writing "love letters" to the children at the center and that if they did not stop they would take legal action. I remember trying in vain to explain to you that these were not love letters, but letters of encouragement to the youth. They expressed a great deal of support and guidance, always directing them to seek out their counselors. I guess what I expected from you was that same sense of support and belief in me that this accusation was ridiculous. My evaluation from my placement was excellent. I was a top student in the program graduating with distinction and your comments were "How could I do such a thing to put the reputation of the program on the line, didn't I know how hard it was to find practicum placements for students," and that you had nothing more to say. For a nineteen-year-old who trusted and respected you completely, I fell flat on my face.

In fact, it took me years to recover. I dropped out of college, married an abusive spouse, divorced and came back to our community. I was afraid to apply for jobs anywhere here pending they may know about the terrible misdeed that I did to the college, and what if they knew you or my practicum supervisor.

After a few years of counseling and being told continuously that I was truly good at what I did, and after that practicum supervisor was fired, I once again was successful at my ECD career, first at the school board, then being hired as a pediatric nurse and then as a program coordinator. I have been complimented many times on my ability with children, but all the while I still feel a sense of running from you. I sometimes feel that in some way I have let you down, that you don't see me as the person that I am and that in your mind all those things were true. They were not then and they are not now, nor will they ever be.

I think I have learned a lot from this experience. Although it set me back 15 years it feels good to finally put it to paper and give it to the right person. A friend who died last fall always told me not to leave things to tomorrow. I can't run. I can't continue to feel this way anymore. This time I know that you will understand because I have made it clear as to how I feel and where I am coming from. I still have to decide whether to take the risk of passing this in to you, but I think and hope that I will.

I meant what I said in class last week. You have and will always be an inspiration to me. You always endeavor to challenge us in ways that we learn, and in ways that make me think of who I am and how I have arrived at that. I will always hold you in a position of respect, and I hope that you as well as I can grow together from this experience. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to share after all these years. It feels

better already. Finally I have attached the article I was going to reflect on about how to make the call whether a family is safe for kids: a social worker's perspective. Maybe the issue I really wanted to address is my personal safety....I think I have...

This letter took me completely by surprise - and I was floored. My journal, at that time, continues with my searching for how to respond to this bombshell in my life.

This mentor thing disturbs me - I'm not sure how to respond. On one level I'm enormously upset that my actions influenced her choices and feelings so much - appalled that a person I'd looked up to so much (her supervisor) was [not the person I thought] and incredulous that Morgan, that anyone, would pay that much attention to what I say!

I've operated for years on the notion that my students hardly pay any attention to what I say, and I sometimes overdramatize to make a point hoping some small part will stick somewhere. If Morgan took me too much to heart, do others? I'm so uncomfortable with this. I want them to do their own thinking - my courses just being part of the context. I don't see myself as a powerful influence in anyone's life (except my children's - and my dog and on occasion, my family).

How to make amends? What to think about the length of time she's carried this and only now expressed it? What light does this shed on [other students remarks about me as a mentor]....What if you don't want to be a mentor - what if you want to - see myself as - a struggling fellow-professional? (Journal, November 30, 1996)

We often hear that one of the difficulties with teaching is that we never find out the long-term effects of our work. Doctors and nurses know right away - the patient gets better or dies. A lawyer wins a case or does not. An architect sees a building that people live in and love - or hate. But we teachers rarely get a glimpse of what we accomplish. We operate on faith that what we do will make a difference for someone, hopefully a good one. We cannot even agree, as a profession, on what makes good teaching or poor teaching. So, for me, Morgan's letter was a glimpse into my effect as a teacher - a rather terrifying one - and I feel changed. I think I have become much more careful about what I do as a teacher now - I have been given a sense of its magnitude.

I wonder how I might have responded if I had not been writing this thesis? My initial reaction, I think, was to run. Reading and re-reading Morgan's letter, and writing the context for it, has me looking at aspects of my teaching that would be all too easy to ignore. This thesis process, all of a sudden, has taken me in a direction I had not

anticipated and forced me to think, not just about Morgan, but about all the students I come in contact with.

And what does this tell me about this research process that provided the setting that encouraged her to speak up? That, in itself, justifies this study. Who else has not yet spoken? (Tears starting here. I don't cry much anymore so when I do, I know I've hit a nerve - maybe comes from a bit of realization of how uninviting I've sometimes been to student voice in the past.) I may learn about this more when I meet with her - I can't write a response (can I?) - seems like I need to apologize face to face.

I've just realized...that Morgan's outburst earlier this year in class - that time when I asked for silent reading time and she wanted (I thought) to continue a conversation - what I should have recognized is that when there's an over-reaction to a small thing, it's a sign, often, of some larger matter unresolved - and I missed it. What else have I missed? (Journal, November 30, 1996)

At this time, I was reading Nelson (1994) who talks about the transformative quality of autobiography. Although I never considered that, as I began this study, I can see that as my understanding of case-based instruction changes, as the authority shifts in my classroom, this story of my teaching is also changing me. And, as the writing I do changes me, I feel stronger about encouraging my students to do the same.

The Nelson (1994) article makes me think more about autobiography as transformative ...gives added strength to encouraging students to write more about their own life stories. If this process is so helpful to my own growth, as a professional and a person, how can I best encourage the process in my students? Do I use cases enough as launching pads for both child development theory and personal reflection?

The notion that one can "*construct* one's self-identity through narrative" (Nelson, 1994, p. 394) strikes a chord. Am I in such a process now? I sense that this research journal and the reflection it demands - on myself as a teacher and as a person - *is* changing who I am in the eyes of my students. In my own eyes? (Journal, November 30, 1996)

I somehow do seem to have a better sense of who I am as a teacher as I re-read my journal entries for this year, November, 1997. Most of them deal with interactions, with students and colleagues. I used the Brookfield (1995) format - his six questions to get self-reflection going - and it seems to give a different twist to my journal. Although the questions are open-ended, they do seem to direct my thoughts in a way that does not happen when I face a blank page and just start writing. I mention that I am very proud that no students have dropped out of our program yet. That typically happens in our

program by this time of year, when students become overwhelmed, I suspect. I hope that is a sign that students' emotional needs, as well as academic ones, are being attended to. The next entry describes an interaction where a little humor seemed to put one rather tense student more at ease:

I felt most connected this week during humorous exchanges with one student who was "putting herself down" in the play course discussion and I interrupted to say that's not allowed. She'd called herself "retarded" - so I did my mini-lecture thing and then, wanting to make sure she didn't see it as a "heavy" thing, I called her "retard" a little later in the discussion - everyone got a kick out of this. She stayed after class just to chat informally about how things were going - it felt good. (Journal, November 15, 1997)

I was able to get my hands on some baby snakes and added them to our Learning Through Play curriculum. These little moments make it all great fun for me:

One most connected moment was successfully getting the three snakes all set up in an aquarium for traveling - having them out (in a baby bath tub) where students have a chance to see them up close and some handled them. Makes a great mini-field trip for our playschool kids to come next door to see the snakes and works great with our pal W.- gives him something positive to look for during his "peace and quiet" timeouts. A nice activity to draw everyone together.

There was a great fun moment in Child Development when everyone interrupted our earnest discussion to crowd to the snake tank and watch two garter snakes fight over a guppy. (Journal, November 20, 1997)

The young rebels, mentioned in my October, 1996 entries as the students who came to class late, surface in my journal again this month. The next entry reflects my steps to make their tardiness more of a class concern, but, as I re-read it, I notice that I still have not figured out how to raise this issue of coming in late with the whole class. I want to do this when it happens, in a problem-solving manner rather than a confrontational one. Since this behavior is rarely a problem by second semester, I wonder if it just takes some students a while to appreciate how much a part they are of the group and how much the group is the learning vehicle for us all.

I felt most disconnected when the three young ones were at it again with side conversations, until I put on the videocase of the teen prostitutes in Calgary and that sobered everyone up. I mostly just ignored them, because I was busy concentrating on other things.

It was interesting that during the after/class group one other student spoke up and said how distracting she found this group when trying to listen to a videotape. The others agreed with her. So I asked what they would like to do about it. One student said she felt like telling them to shut up. She suggested that I stop the video and give everyone a chance to "talk out what's on their minds" and then go back to the video. She thought that would embarrass them enough to make the point. (Journal, November 20, 1997)

The after/class group often comes up with good suggestions and helps validate my own impressions of what is happening in our classroom. Their above comments suggest that dealing with inappropriate behaviors should take place right away. I guess, in trying to shift authority, it is easy for the balance to get a little out of whack and I need to accept that there will be times when I teeter a bit before gaining my balance.

The next journal excerpt describes a cause for celebration for both staff and students as we talked about an incident with our "challenging child" in the college play program.

The surprise this week was that W., the aggressive child that no other child seems to want to play with, carried on a wonderful playing session with another child. It's the first time this has happened. It was marvelously imaginative and no one got hurt. It feels good because we didn't push him into this, but let it evolve. We all felt great that all the students had a hand in playing with W. and helping him reach this point. A real group effort and celebration. We're all learning so much from this kid! (Journal, November 20, 1997)

My other entries, in November, 1997, largely deal with the frustrations that arise when four different instructors are coordinating their efforts on behalf of one group of students. I want to acknowledge that although frustrations with administration, and sometimes with fellow teachers, seems to be an inevitable part of the landscape, I chose to concentrate my thesis efforts on what I can most easily change - myself.

I felt quite good about listening to the after/class group and following up on some of their suggestions. The next journal entry has a nice comfortable feel about it as I respond to Brookfield's (1995) questions. I think this may indicate a growing ease with students and with myself:

I felt most connected and affirmed as a teacher this week when we were talking behind the observation window and students asked if they would

have me for a teacher next semester.... I felt comfortable and connected with students - that we were in this together and understood one another....I think that the learning through play and child development principles really get through to students when the whole class meets at the end of the play program to discuss what's happening for children.

I also listened to the after/class group and their feelings of being overwhelmed and was able to eliminate one of my assignments that can wait until next semester and was able to negotiate with another teacher to make one of their assignments for her more manageable. (Journal, November 29, 1997)

As each new term starts, my journal entries reflect my efforts to set the ground rules with students and to establish a trusting place to share who we are with children. I seem to appreciate more how gently this creating a safe place needs to be done - and that it takes time. Listening to students' voices has made me so much more aware that the behavior I model influences their behavior with children and families.

In my first journal entry of **December**, 1996, I write more about my responses to Morgan's letter:

Morgan came into class late, once discussion groups had started. I gave her a hug - it seemed like the natural thing to do - and then we discussed her letter as the other groups carried on. She reminded me that she was only nineteen at that time, very impressionable and dealing with an alcoholic father and living 3500 miles from home.

We talked about her practicum supervisor and our totally different takes on that person. And we discussed our impressions of each other - my seeing her as strong and only paying attention to strongly-worded things. Her saying she wasn't strong at all. Her saying that my sharing of my journal this year and its doubts showed her a side of me she hadn't seen before. My wondering how I must appear to young students who may be taking me too seriously while I'm assuming they're not paying attention at all. Her hesitation about bringing this up at all - my wondering why it took her so long (we've seen each other on and off many times over the years)....

So - a real revelation - unexpected and very sobering - to think that as a teacher I could have such a long-lasting effect on a student. It's scary as hell, actually, and the frightening clarity it brings makes me think that perhaps it's time to switch to a different line of work. I don't really think I have the awareness it takes to be a teacher - but does anyone? Whether teaching or parenting, for that matter. Morgan's been very gracious about the whole thing and remains a "fan" - and that makes it even scarier - how do I *not* forget this? (Journal, December 6, 1996)

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Morgan's trust and forthrightness have helped me so much to appreciate myself more as an early childhood educator - someone that people can look to for encouragement. I find this so hard as I am all too aware of my own shortcomings. I was so pleased that, after all this, Morgan remains the true professional and is busy this year, helping one of our certificate students have a marvelous practicum experience.

I guess I felt most connected when some former students asked for my help or advice with early childhood issues. It's nice to feel recognized as a person who's involved and who's someone to trust and talk to, and ask for help. This is when I love being an ECD resource in this community - building bridges between people - linking certificate and diploma students with graduates. So many of us on the same wave length - what's best for kids - going out of our way to make it happen. Sometimes I forget that this is a wonderful advantage to being in a small city for so long. The network is wonderful. It makes you feel like you're part of a community of caring people - and that you had a small role in each one's journey to becoming that. (Journal, December 5, 1997)

This shifting of my relationship with students has led to some very practical adjustments in my courses as I try to remain flexible about my curriculum and their needs. For instance, over the years, I have felt quite badly for the young mothers who take our program, spend lots of time in practicum with other people's children, only to find that they start to have troubles at home, because they are neglecting their own children (who are often just preschoolers themselves). This year, I have tried to be mindful of our young mothers and encourage them to stay home some days with their own children, and still receive the practicum credit they would get by being in a centre somewhere. I think this goes a long way in reducing their stress levels, and they are still learning lots from a child - their own:

It felt good to read R's journal where she talked about following her daughter's lead in play at an outdoor event rather than dragging her home when R. wanted to leave - and what a different close feeling they had at the end of a busy day, when her little girl got to choose when to play and when to leave. I'm so glad that I allowed some practicum time for this mother (and two others) to just play with their own children.

I've felt so guilty in the past that we drag our students away from time that their own children need with them to do our "program" and, as a result, they ignore their best teachers - their own children. (Journal, December 5, 1997)

Now that I keep thinking about how to share the authority in my classroom, I am becoming a lot more sensitive to the lives of students outside the classroom and how to

make our class a safe and nurturing place to share their everyday stories of stresses and joys. In the next journal excerpt from December, 1997, I reflect on our class Christmas celebration at the end of the first term. As my authority with students shifted, I was able to see things more clearly from their points of view and to appreciate how welcoming a feast together can be when creating a community of trust is valued.

I felt most connected at our Christmas festivities where we combined the certificate and diploma students for a luncheon. I'd always looked to the other staff to do this stuff since it's their specialty - that is, group events, celebrations - so I feel pleased that it was thanks to my ideas that we put the two groups together and that our department provided the lunch. It was a comfortable, friendly time. I wonder why I think someone else should do this kind of thing - just because they always do? We had quite good attendance too. I think, knowing that I like to feel welcomed to a gathering, that I was able to go out of my way to make sure everyone knew about it. Lots of humor and laughing. (Journal, December 12, 1997)

I am not very proud of the next excerpt. In it I reflect on an incident with a student who has been a concern all semester. In a variety of situations, she seemed to refuse to accept responsibility for her actions and, of course, how then can she change them? I reflect next on one of those times when I was not very effective in handling a difficult interaction.

I met one "challenging" student in the hallway and started a discussion that would better have been done sitting down - talking privately somewhere. I had called her out of the playroom as she, very inappropriately, had gone in to talk to another student about personal things when the program was happening. When I said her behavior was inappropriate, she said her usual, "Well, I was only....." so I mentioned that I had some concerns about her attitude, but got the feeling she didn't want to talk about that topic. Then I got a note from her which included a statement that she doesn't have a bad attitude and that my attitude is part of her problem. (Journal, December 12, 1997)

This incident reminded me of another in 1996 that I wish I had handled differently. Not addressing concerns when they come up often simply postpones them, until they crop up in a different form that poses even more difficult professional decisions.

I feel sometimes like it's a failure on my part that I haven't been able to communicate with a student, but I'm feeling surer now that some students are inappropriate to work with children. They're just not able to

put the needs of the children before their own personal needs. I find that we instructors are very unwilling to point out personal inappropriateness. I think we want students to like us and for things to run smoothly and to avoid conflict.

I avoided it last year with the partying students at the conference and I don't feel good about it now. It may have been uncomfortable for me to confront them with the inappropriateness of picking up a guy and bringing him back to our hotel, but I wish now, for all our sakes, that I'd done it. The other instructors involved said to wait and we'd address it in class, but it never happened. And I found I couldn't give references to some students based on that incident, yet I never really told them that was a factor.

If our job is to help students become professional, as they work with children, how does our cowardice help them realize what they're doing that's unprofessional? I see too many of our grads doing unprofessional things now in the workforce where they have some say over children's lives and I feel I really haven't lived up to my principles. So I'm going to start following through - as gently and professionally as I can. (Journal, December 12, 1997)

In January, 1998, I was scheduled to teach a group of students in the ECD diploma program, most of whom I have taught at some time in previous years. I noticed that some seemed happier than others at that news. Still using Brookfield's (1995) framework for my journal responses, I described my impressions:

What surprised me most this week? What comes to mind is how pleased last year's students, now in diploma, seem to be that I'll be their teacher next semester. Others, who've had me in the distant past, seem a bit nervous. This seems to indicate to me that I am changing who I am in the classroom, for the better. (Journal, December 12, 1997)

I am beginning to think that part of the fascination of teaching is the unexpected challenges that students bring my way. Just when I feel I am finally understanding one thing, another surfaces to test me. And, as I struggle with how my shifting authority in the classroom shifts my relationship with students, the students continue to shape who I am as a teacher - and as a person.

As second terms start each year in **January**, I usually have a combination of continuing students, with whom a relationship has been established, and new students with whom the relationship building is just beginning. I find the more I know a student, the quicker we can move on to what we both want to learn during this time together. In January, 1996, my journal described two continuing students who were very unhappy with me

and my course. I think, at that time, that my not providing safe spaces for sharing concerns allowed the issues to fester and eat away at their relationship with me and with the class:

.... two students, just out of high school, were sulking because they felt bossed around by older students - I was glad I took the time to talk to them after class, although this didn't seem to help much as they continued to sulk...Some of our students bring emotional baggage that makes it difficult for a teacher to ever please them I think... (Journal, January 26, 1996)

As I read this now, in 1998, I notice a certain tone that often creeps into teachers' conversations - a tone that seems to convey that what the teacher is not able to handle successfully must somehow be the student's fault. As my relationship with students shifts, I am beginning to realize that discontent is a sign that something needs to be addressed by all of us as learners in the classroom. These same two students were unhappy with how project and discussion groups were formed:

How much to intervene in the composition of small groups? Two students obviously uncomfortable with students choosing their own groups. So, I made a teacher-decision to pull names from a hat. Although I asked if there were any objections to that method, it was still pretty directive on my part and not especially successful. (Journal, January 26, 1996)

As I share the authority more in the classroom, the issue of grouping is no longer mine. I let people group themselves for projects and let them sort out any clash of personalities themselves. It is a wonderful stress-reliever - not to be the decision-maker in all these thorny little issues that can take up so much time and energy.

In January, 1998, I write about two returning students who decided to join our class after phone calls from me describing our class as taking students' needs and perspectives into consideration by sharing the authority - the decision-making:

Was so pleased that N. showed up. She had done part of her diploma, then left to devote herself to foster children. She seems delighted to be back and made a comment about attachment disorder that really helped validate the text I'd chosen for the Child and Family course. She surprised me, though, by saying that these two courses are actually ones

she already has, but she wants to come anyway! So I'll try to work something out so that she can get credit for a course she doesn't already have. What a nice compliment.

Also felt good about O. Was told that she wasn't coming back, but gave her a call anyway to describe how I hope to integrate the two courses and keep the assignments helpful and related to their work. It sounded like she might reconsider and join us - I hope so. But either way, I'm glad I phoned and I think it will help her with her choice. I really do feel we need to adjust diploma courses to be "real" - that is, help them with the job they're already doing. They have enough issues to handle daily without me adding to the pile - our ECD program should be helping to make the pile more manageable. (Journal, January 18, 1998)

These entries, I think, reflect a new sense in me of how much my courses need to address the issues each student faces daily in her practice with children. In order to do that, the students need to help design the course as we go, in what seems like a very natural way to share authority. The more I listen to students, the more I feel subtle little shifts in our relationship. Trust slowly accumulates. I seem to be letting go of those old warnings from somewhere in the past: "students are lazy" - "you have to push them" - "they'll take advantage of you" - "it'll turn into a gab fest..." My next journal entry reflects on the differences I am beginning to notice in myself as my relationships shift:

I'm thinking that so much of the "conflict" in the past (or perhaps hard feelings is a better description), came from trying to force students to do what I thought they needed to do to get ready to work with children. It's a lot less stressful on all of us to stay calm and patient, non-critical, let them make mistakes, talk through what they need to talk through, take the extra time that some of them need. (Journal, January 18, 1998)

I find that I am more likely now to phone students to find out how things are going for them and to ask how my course can be more helpful. Although it is time-consuming, I want to be more of a model for them of the consulting that I hope they do with the children and families in their programs. I am beginning to appreciate how much my own teaching has been strongly influenced by the modeling Jean provided in her graduate seminar classes with us on curriculum, and I want to do this for my students.

I've found the phone conversations helpful - from the person who has little to say to the one who's very articulate about what kind of issue she wants to explore and plunges right in on the phone. Some are quite concerned about how to convince parents of the "right" way to handle

children or run a program. I'm trying to provide a model of active listening to help them sort out their thoughts. I'm also much more aware now that if they can experience active listening as helpful for them, perhaps they can begin to understand that this is a very effective response to parents who question them. By listening, they may come to understand that, often, what parents say bothers them may in fact not be the real issue at all. (Journal, January 27, 1998)

My **February** journal entries that related to my relationships with students are sparse. Consulting with after/class groups has meant sharing the decision-making in a way that takes students' sensitivities into consideration, as reflected in this 1997 entry:

I was going to return to stricter deadlines for journals, but the after/class group persuaded me that there are some legitimate reasons for keeping it flexible. In the past, I would have set the deadline - period - without consulting, and probably made their lives and learning unnecessarily harder. (Journal, February 14, 1997)

In February, 1998, my biggest challenge was to integrate my two courses (one on children's behavior and one on child and the family) with each student's practicum, which was also their place of work. I feel quite strongly, especially at the diploma level, that coursework and practice need to go hand in hand. It is not enough to jump through the usual hoops for a course. If I am preparing people to work with children then I need to do that effectively. What we read about and discuss in class needs to appear in their programs for children. Fortunately, this happens for most students, but the challenge for me comes when this does not happen. This is my job - how do I help these students see the connections? My journal entries for this month reflect how difficult I find this process to be.

Spent most of the morning at one centre. Oh dear. Loud voices, often harsh and scolding. Lots of crying children all morning. Very few hugs - except from me. A general lack of patience. So how to convey what's needed - just saying what I think won't do anything except make people mad. A good test of my newly thought-through skills - awareness has to come from the teachers - they have to notice and want to make the changes - and I need to listen and reflect until they reach that point. (Journal, February 10, 1998)

It is times like these when I find my job very difficult. I sympathize with these women who work long hours each day for low pay. It is work that I have done for short periods and it is exhausting. On the other hand, I also sympathize with young children who have to spend long days without getting their needs met. And I have supervised students who were able to do this job sensitively and well, even under trying circumstances. Not harming children remains a non-negotiable for me. Situations such as this one are a dilemma - how to remain helpful rather than critical, when subtle measures do not seem to work?

My next entry returns to my continuing dilemma with students who are not doing well and trying to figure out what would be most helpful on my part. In the past, I can remember discussions where I would frankly tell the student my observations and often tears or anger would result. My preoccupation with this topic during this month's entries seems to indicate that I am trying to be more sensitive to the learner's point of view. It is so easy when students are doing well because it makes me feel good. And it is so difficult when they are doing poorly and are unable or unwilling to see what needs to be done and it makes me feel miserable. How do I *not* tell them what I think they ought to do, but rather listen and support their own puzzling it out - especially when they are likely to fail without substantial improvement? As I type this I am reminded of a statement by a mathematics instructor at our college who tells students, "Don't get mad at me. I'm just the scorekeeper. You do the work." It is so much easier when the answers are right or wrong numbers than when the answers are happy or unhappy children.

As February, 1998 ended, I seemed to be enjoying my group of diploma students and our work together more than I have in past years:

I seem to feel more comfortable with this group than I did with the last diploma group. I wonder if it's my new approach - or if it's the individuals themselves - or if it's because I am their only ECD instructor - that makes the difference or maybe a combination of all three?
(Journal, February 21, 1998)

As I re-read my journal entries for **March**, beginning in 1994, I found few references to my relationship with students. One, in 1995, was written after I had viewed a videotape of a class discussion held the day before. It seemed to represent, for me, a new awareness of students as people. I realize, as I write this, that I have interrupted

students for years in my role of "expert" as I kept discussions on topic and corrected "wrong thinking" wherever I saw it - and I do not recall apologizing for what I saw as the teacher's responsibility. Now, in 1998, I think I am more patient about hearing others out and more likely to wait to see if the group itself can monitor a "talker."

I need to apologize to one very verbal student. In my efforts to control her "hogging air time," I don't always respond or summarize what she's said as I think she'll talk more, so I shift the discussion to someone else. I come across as quite rude [on the videotape]. I like her and I'll try to explain to her what I noticed on the tape. I'll just have to try to put a spin on her contributions that will relate them to the discussion at hand. Although I think it's rude to talk too much and prevent others from contributing, it's still no excuse for me to be rude to her. Perhaps we can agree on some way to make sure others also get a chance to speak. Only fair to discuss it with her directly. (Journal, March 17, 1995)

In March, 1996, I was reading Nel Noddings' (1992) book about teachers and caring and her thoughts were inspiring me to begin to think about how caring for adult students fits with who I am in the classroom. In an assignment for one of Jean's seminars, a group of us were sharing with the class some insight from a reading by Nel Noddings (1992). We started by asking the class to think of a caring teacher each had at some time during their schooling. The following journal excerpt reflects on my surprise at how unexpectedly difficult that was when I did it myself:

I was surprised that it was very difficult to think of a caring teacher I'd had - one person that took a personal interest in me. In elementary school, the only one I can think of was my grade six teacher and her personal chat with me about smoking. I wonder how children saw me (adults see me)? Does anyone see me as a caring teacher? How important that is - that's why we went into teaching. Need to think more about caring and how it fits into adult education. I do it when a situation smacks me in the face (for example, with native learners), but how does one do it with all students - how do you find the time to do that? (Journal, March 11, 1996)

About this time I was also reading *Teacher Lore* by Schubert and Ayers (1992). Their thoughts seemed to have provoked the following comments in a similar vein. In this 1996 entry I begin to think more deeply about researching my own teaching and what I might have overlooked so far in the process:

...in all my research, do I say anything about caring for the students - personal interactions - my concern for their personal lives? Or are all my

comments on the academic curriculum. Granted, I'm studying the use of cases and personal stories and I know I occasionally mention concern with students' lives, but I'm not sure I talk much about the feelings - mine / theirs - about the personal dynamics that go on in a class...How seriously do I take the human element in adult teaching? Why do I not think of it as being as important as it is with children? (Journal, March 11, 1996)

In March, 1998, my entries seem more confident and content somehow, whether it is a pleasant or difficult encounter. This first entry describes a chance meeting with my students from the previous semester:

I'm seldom at the college these days so was quite surprised and pleased today when I went into the cafeteria - to be stopped by three students from last semester. One said something kiddingly to the effect, "So I hear that you miss us and are coming back to teach us again." They all said something about how much they enjoyed my comments in their journals - how I'd sometimes write more than they would. It was very smiley, warm and fun and I enjoyed it immensely. The new approach this fall, all the integrating with one main instructor must be heading in the right direction. I have never had such a receptive bunch - one I have felt so much at home with - a lot, now that I think of it - like the way I felt about my classes when I taught children in the school system. I like that. (Journal, March 5, 1998)

The next entry that same day deals with the hardest part of what I do as an instructor, but I can still sense the same tone of confidence and content even when the situation is unpleasant.

Hardest thing at the moment was putting together letters for those students doing poorly in my courses - a "midterm report" - to say, as tactfully as I could, that they are not passing at this point and that I wanted to give them fair notice so that they could start to do what was needed to pass. It's hard - this needing to let students know how they are doing in your course without getting them either very angry or very discouraged. I'm tempted to just put it off, but it's really unfair to get that kind of surprise at the end of the course, and we have no "marks" as such, along the way, that anyone can average up and see where they stand. I think I made a good decision to hand the responsibility back to each of them to take the initiative. (Journal, March 5, 1998)

In my next journal entry for March, 1998, I reflect on an after/class discussion which involved everyone since we are a small class. I tried asking again for "I" messages to give them practice in this important skill, especially when the message is a negative one.

The positives included my being organized and keeping everyone on topic, something like "You're the best instructor to do this." I asked if they felt I overdid it - as I think I do myself - but they said no, it was fine. The others commented on my allowing the time and space for listening to one another's concerns - being able to relieve the stress of the job by sharing their struggles with the group - and the cookies.

The negatives were interesting to me and helpful. One group complained about the quantity of reading and said they wished there were more videos to circulate and they wished the texts were on tape so that they could listen while they were doing housework - preparing supper - driving. Another group said they felt really stressed when I said that I wanted to hear a story from everyone - evidently today I pointed my fingers in the general direction of a couple silent ones - even partly in jest, this is not welcome. As thinking comes through articulating, we'll go back to starting with stories of practice, in groups of two or three, rather than one group of twelve. I'm not sure I would have realized this need for small groups in this class if I hadn't been writing in this journal. I think I would have taken their comments at face value and just stopped pointing. Umm- that in itself explains the need to articulate doesn't it! (Journal, March 14, 1998)

When the issue of parenting influencing teaching surfaces in this group, I am able to appreciate its significance in a discussion of professionals working with other people's children and use it as a window of understanding.

Surprising how many of these women have 13-14 year olds at home and their challenges often surface in our conversations. It's a good opportunity for me to help them make the links with early childhood - to emphasize the importance of working with young children and the links between parenting and teaching - the need to understand their own situation so that they can become better resources for parents. Occasionally some students say quite honestly that they just don't see the connection between what happened in their childhood and how it influences their work with children. I'm so glad the Gonzalez-Mena (1998) book also makes these connections quite clearly and asks the reader to thoughtfully make their own. (Journal, March 14, 1998)

As I read through my **April** journals over the past four years, for entries relating to my relationship with students, I found the next odd little item from 1996. It sounds to me like something out of a time warp. Is this really me?

I don't have much patience - much time for - those who aren't really into the course with both feet. Struggling? - I'll be glad to help. Goofing off?

- no patience. Should Abigail be allowed to sleep through classes or should she be asked to leave? Does sleeping through class meet attendance requirements? And from now on perhaps I'll ask to see what someone like her is busy writing during class when everyone else is busy doing something else. If it's not related, then I'll simply mark them absent (same for sleeping). (Journal, April 1, 1996)

Where is the caring teacher in that excerpt? I would like to think that I have now learned to take such a student aside for a private chat and remain in the mode of curiosity. What would cause a student to sleep through a class where everyone else is engaged? If my child development course teaches how to read the "language" of children's behavior, how better to model that for students than to show curiosity about the message this student's behavior is sending!

The next entry for April, 1997, strikes a more hopeful note. The contrast over even this one-year span encourages me.

When my education class was over, no one left, but just continued discussions with each other or talked to me about resources. One student stayed on to just talk and told me that the teachers on the "Great Teachers" video reminded her of me. I've never had so many heart-warming comments about my teaching. I feel like saying, "no, that's not me - I'm not that nice." For so many years, I've put content first and stressed what that required. That's how I saw my job. And some of those who couldn't measure up, ended up angry or discouraged or distanced by me. Being flexible, trying to see things from the student's side, *being a student again myself*, accepting that each person decides what the course is about for herself.

We're a community of learners - rather than one [me] making the rest pay attention to what I think they should be paying attention to. Recognizing that the strongest message I send about teaching is the one I model. Some past students, now overly tough on the staff that work for them, have sadly taught me this. They were in need of caring role models - and they didn't find one in me. (Journal, April 1, 1997)

This journey to become a real person is harder and longer than I thought. And I have to accept all this in myself first as a way of understanding the journey that everyone else is on.

As I read through my April journal for 1997, I came across an entry describing one student's struggle to discipline her own children at home in a way that totally contradicted everything we had learned that year. My resolve to share authority and

become a more caring teacher was cemented. She made me acutely aware that the way I had been teaching all these years was not working for some students and I wonder how I could have been so out of touch with her reality for so much of the year. As I comment on this student's journal in my own journal, I seemed to be trying to get past the "blame the victim" reflex and try to see how her honest sharing might shed some light on my own learning.

There was a time when I would be appalled by such a journal entry this late in the year. I'm still concerned about it, but I see it as a source of strength for this woman. She's articulating what she's struggling with. This (hopefully) will not be her final thoughts on the subject. It's an indication that she's trying to think through the important things in her life and that our course is helping her with that. She could easily have chosen not to write about it, but she's written about it for a reason.

I thought at first that it might be a "cry for help." I'm not so sure now that it is. I think it's a stage in figuring out. I have to allow students the same right to progress in thinking that I see in myself. It takes a long time to break old habits - to see alternatives - to make them automatic.

It would have been much more helpful if this student's understanding of what adults do when children are difficult had been aired earlier in the course. As Nussbaum and Novick (1982, p.187) describe it, "...the first crucial step in an instructional strategy...should be making every student aware of his own preconceptions." Like all of us, she needs a sounding board. One of her strengths is this willingness to reach out and talk to other people. As I reflect on it, I realize the need to come to terms with the purpose of the courses I teach. I need to make comfortable space in my courses for preconceptions to be voiced and confronted by others' conceptions - to introduce those seeds of "conceptual conflict" that cause students to continue to wonder.
(Journal, April 19, 1997)

I remember this student as conscientious and hard-working, yet it is obvious that my child development course did not allow for the "cognitive dissonance" that might have helped her seriously question her beliefs and the actions they motivate. It is a clear reminder to me of the complexity of the process of helping people be with children, and how critical my courses could be for some.

A related comment appeared in another student's journal that month that helped me think through how much parenting skills and teaching skills parallel one another and that a student's interactions with her own children also need to be part of my courses.

This has been one of my major concerns this year and I have not yet voiced it to any of my teachers. Throughout the year I have gotten to know some of my fellow students better. I can't picture them all in the work force remembering what they have been taught. I fear that many of the graduates will not hold on to all this vital information. Some can't even use the information now with their own family while they have the support of the teachers at the college. What are they going to do when they are working and are faced with the same behavioral problems?
(excerpt from student journal, April 15, 1997)

As happens so many times in this interactive process between students and myself, shaping one another in the classroom, this student has put into words a doubt that had been nagging at the back of my mind for years. The first student's honesty and this student's observations have nudged me to change my current courses so that working with one's own children has become as important in my assignments as working with other people's children. I wrote the following response in her journal.

Yes - you've hit on an issue I think about a lot. One response is that it takes more than a 45 or 90 hour course in child development to change a lifetime of old family habits. But I also think child development could be taught more effectively - any suggestions? For me, so much depends on how you've been treated as a child - and I'm not sure how to counteract that in one short course. (Journal, April 15, 1997)

All this has got me wondering more about the process of change and what is most effective when both intellect and emotions are involved, as they are in any interactions with children. Just sharing information has not done it. And this is regrettable, since I have spent many years perfecting this approach. Journal entries, like the ones above, convince me that creating a safe space for students to honestly share their struggles, bounce them off their peers, examine their echoes in the light of others' struggles and perceptions (including mine) may be more helpful in encouraging them to shift perspectives. My next journal entry reflects my growing appreciation for how much time this takes:

Thinking about how long it's taken me to change my thoughts on teaching has helped me accept that changing how a person thinks about her interactions with children is also a long process. But it also makes me aware that all my talk of child development did not seem to connect with this mother's understanding of her own two children and it's a strong motivator for me to rethink how to make our early childhood program more effective. I know now that interactions with one's own children

need to be part of the process. So I've begun to rethink, in earnest, how I might approach my courses next fall. (Journal, May 13, 1997)

In May, 1997, I re-read all my formal college student evaluations from the past eight years and commented on my impressions in the following journal entry:

The evaluations from this past semester are the most positive batch so far - so wonderful that I'm considering quitting while I'm ahead. My general impression from re-reading the past eight years worth is that overall the evaluations are more positive than I'd remembered. The earlier ones seemed to elicit more comments on how knowledgeable I was as a teacher, while the latter ones veer toward comments on *how* students feel they're learning.

Most years had one or two "disgruntled" learners; however, no one seemed to surface in the last semester as being unhappy with me. Perhaps one sign of sharing authority, becoming more awake to each student, can be judged by how I respond to the learner that's *unhappy* with my course. Perhaps this is a valid sign of how well I'm listening and caring, how well I'm sharing the authority rather than imposing it. Perhaps my progress can be measured by the decreasing amount of defensive or impatient-with-the-learner entries to be found in my journal, as I struggle to see things more from the students' points of view and less from the viewpoint of the authority in the classroom. (Journal, May 25, 1997)

I chuckle as I read the next entry, written after a departmental meeting with my colleagues. This is such a switch from some of our past discussions where someone other than me would be advocating for students.

... comments from one of my colleagues that "we're listening too much to students." If it's brought up again, it might be good to find out what she's thinking. In spite of my sometimes automatic, negative reaction to being questioned by the students which I now keep in check, I don't think it's possible to listen too much to students. That thought doesn't make any sense to me. I see it more now as a necessity to listen, to discuss and to arrive at a mutually agreed upon conclusion. (Journal, May 25, 1997)

I am so pleased that this thesis process, over the past four years, has brought me so much closer to students. I feel I have learned all the lessons I needed to learn from this cycle of my life and that I am now ready to go back and work with children.

As I was preparing the last draft of this chapter, in May, 1998, I received quite unexpectedly a lovely letter from one of my students this year. I have decided to include it, with her permission, in this chapter. It is, for me, a "grand" finale:

May 10, 1998

Dear Jo Ann

I know this may seem strange getting a letter when all I have to do is pick up the phone and call. I guess writing seems easier for me at this point. I want you to know how thankful I am for your encouragement and understanding. I know that I was able to trust you and this is a very difficult thing for me to do. The only people I have ever really truly trusted are children and I just wanted to say thank you for helping me see that not all adults are out to get me. I think you are a wonderful instructor and I think you have a gift of compassion and thoughtfulness. I truly missed you this past semester and I will miss you next also. I think that it is great you are going to be with your grandchild or children. I think your family is truly blessed to have you in it. I am sorry you are going, but happy that you are following your heart. Thank you, Jo Ann, for my first semester in ECD. I won't ever forget the love you have in your heart for children. You have a wonderful gift. Thank you for sharing it with me.

CHAPTER SIX

Reflective Turns: Conclusions in a Work-In-Progress

I began this study - this research journey - in my community college classroom. I began with a sense that I could be doing a better job of teaching, but I was not sure what needed to be addressed. I simply had a sense, from observing the graduates of our program, working in centres with children, that I could be doing a better job of preparing them for this important work. I concentrated first on how to make my classes more engaging, and case-based instruction seemed to capture the interest of my students and help them understand the theories underlying child development in a way that connected to their practice with children. Studying how I facilitated case discussions made me aware how often each student's personal stories of childhood, and of experiences with children, surfaced. Exploring my own personal professional landscape in my studies with Jean Clandinin taught me to recognize the importance of these stories as expressions of embodied knowing for my students.

I also recognized what I had always known, but never thought much about, that is, the power of modeling. Jean's teaching model in our graduate seminars was a powerful influence on how I wanted to be in the classroom and I gradually became aware of how powerful my own modeling for students could be. As I near the end of this formal study, I am acutely aware of how much we are all works-in-progress. I find I am a much more reflective teacher now than when I began and, although I still do things in the classroom that I regret, I feel encouraged that at least now I am more aware of the regrettable, as well as the wonderful, things I do in my teaching.

I find now that I am much more aware of the natural pattern of community building that occurs in a classroom as the semesters progress. In September, there is more of a sense of the superficial in our stories, as it takes time to build rapport and trust and my voice is strongest in guiding the process. By the end of October and into November, there is gradually a move to more complexity, with the discovery and sharing of more deeply personal stories and the light they shed on our interactions with children. Those students who continue with me into the second semester begin to establish a very strong student voice as we more truly become learners together, and my comments and questions focus on challenging each one's thinking. Observing and reflecting on these rhythms and cycles of building a trusting community has given me a much stronger

sense of how long and complex is the process of helping adults to be the best teachers they can be.

Being a teacher-researcher, researching my own practice, was often intense, sometimes painful and always fascinating. The study of my teaching became, as Schon (1991) describes it, "a reflective practice in its own right" (p. 343). To paraphrase Schon (1991, p. 5), I attempted to observe, describe, and try to illuminate the things I actually said and did in my practice over the past four years, by exploring the understandings revealed by the patterns of spontaneous activity that made up my practice. Whenever these patterns appeared strange or puzzling, I assumed that there was an underlying *sense* to be discovered. The reflective turn, as described by Schon (1991, p. 6), is a reflecting on the "understandings already built into the skillful actions of everyday practice...to help practitioners discover what they already understand and know how to do." I have organized this last section in a series of reflective turns to summarize how I discovered what I already "knew."

Reflective Turn One: Close Attention to My Teaching

When I began this study, I had no idea where it would lead. It seemed to me that helping students become more reflective in their interactions with children required me to make sure that I was setting a good example in my own teaching. Journaling each week with my students, keeping my own research journal and sending selections to my advisor each week for her responses was a powerful source of reflecting on practice for me. Analyzing videotapes of myself teaching and faithfully gathering students for after/class sessions kept me awake to myself as a fellow learner and helped me pay attention to what in my teaching would, otherwise, be easy to overlook. I needed to become more reflective myself and see my own teaching improve in order to teach with the inspiration and commitment that I think preparing the next generation of teachers deserves. As I struggled to change some of my own outdated habits, I began to appreciate the complexity of what I was asking my own students to do as they reflected on their own interactions with children.

Reflective Turn Two: Using My Own Learning as a Way to Understand Student Learning

I needed to feel the process of self-reflection and change in my bones so that I could help students feel it in theirs. Or, as Schon (1991) has said, in order to discover the sense in someone else's practice, I needed to question my own. This inside-out view seemed much like my response to my daughter's ear-piercing in junior high. Never having had my own ears pierced, I asked different people about their experiences and went with her, confident that this was a straightforward, fairly painless procedure. But, one look at her outraged-with-pain face, and I immediately said, "Do mine too!" I needed to know what it felt like from the inside, so I would know, in my skin, what she was going through and how I could best help with all the little side effects, so easy to overlook when one is sitting outside an experience.

Working with my thesis supervisor, peeling back the layers of understanding in my teaching, helped me to be sensitive to the process my students were going through as I asked them to examine their work with children. Preparing teachers, as with any of the human service professions, requires a dual emphasis: understanding the concepts and skills of the field and understanding the human interactions, one's "bedside manner." Children are so vulnerable and so dependent on the adults around them who shape the people they will become. Working with children, especially in groups and often under stress, requires professional skills tempered by sensitivity and understanding. We want teachers of the very young to be aware of the importance of what they do. After many conversations and just listening on my part, I gradually became aware that my students needed to feel this sensitivity and understanding from me (as well as my knowledge and skills) in order to better give it to children.

Reflective Turn Three: The Personal - Professional Link in Teaching

As I became more aware of the strength of the personal-professional link in my work, I was better able to help my students become more conscious of their own. I came to appreciate how the strengths and understandings I have as a parent, and as a friend, colour my teaching practices. I think I am better able to separate those things I can influence from those I cannot and respect that students of teaching must construct their own understanding of the profession. I have come to view learning and my place in the

classroom differently, as described by Sfard (1998). Her words have helped me come to grips with the student who is failing in spite of all my efforts:

...learning a subject is now conceived of as a process of becoming a member of a certain community. This entails, above all, the ability to communicate in the language of this community and act according to its particular norms. The norms themselves are to be negotiated in the process of consolidating the community. While the learners are newcomers and potential reformers of the practice, the teachers are the preservers of its continuity. (p. 6)

In addition, I am certainly a better researcher and, as a happy side effect, I think I am becoming a more flexible, understanding person. I feel more at peace with my work.

Reflective Turn Four: Cultivating Habits of Reflection on Who We Are

Preparing those who do not bring a background of good experiences, of a good enough childhood, to teaching is a formidable task. It is the reason that preparing good teachers is so much more difficult than preparing good physicists, or architects, or civil engineers. *Who* teachers are is as important as *what* they know. And part of discovering who you are means cultivating the habit of reflection, of wondering - "Is this the best way?" "Are the children benefiting?"

I have too often seen students in my classes jump through all my hoops of excellence - earn wonderful grades - and then work in programs where they are responsible for many an unhappy day for the child or staff in their care. The ability to jump through hoops, impressive as it may be, is no guarantee of continuing good practice. Writing a teaching journal over the past four years, and re-reading it many times, convinced me of the difficulty of remaining reflective in practice. I was surprised how difficult it was for me to uproot outdated habits and engrain new ones and how important the process of articulation was in helping the "engraining" along. How can I expect students, teachers, parents to move quickly through a process that took me so long?

Reflective Turn Five: Moving from Expertise to Curiosity

When one shifts from being the "expert" in the room, there is a momentary panic at being set adrift. If I do not do what I have always done, what *do* I do? Vivian

Paley(1986) threw me a lifeline from her work: curiosity. I shifted to a different perspective - that of a curious learner. I shifted from "What can I tell them?" to "What can I learn about how they think, what they know, how they understand the concepts we explore together?" And, most importantly, how does this influence what they do with children, especially when under stress? I wanted all of us to view children with curiosity, to be helpful resources and therapeutic play partners, rather than the one who always tells everyone else what to do.

Reflective Turn Six: Seeing My Teaching as Offering Students a Plot Line

In a narrative study, unanticipated insights seem to "pop up" to take a researcher by surprise. One, for me, was becoming aware of how much the teaching I do models for students a plot line or a story to live by in their work with children. I had overlooked this for years. It is widely accepted in our understanding of parenting that we often parent the way we were parented and I believe I will more fully understand my own parenting experience when I am able to watch my own children parent. But I had not been "awake" to how much the teaching my students do may reflect how they were taught by me. The importance of being a listener, taking on a supporting role that allowed each learner to be the lead in their own plot line, so that they could better help children do the same, gradually unfolded from the reflections this study demanded. The word "awake" seems to run through this study, a reflection, perhaps, of my waking up to my own practice and to the importance of what I do.

Reflective Turn Seven: Shifting from Case-Based Instruction to Living Stories

Another turn in this study began with a fascination with case-based instruction and turned into a deeper appreciation of how each person's personal stories affect her practice with children. As I improved in my ability to facilitate case discussion, my authority in the classroom began to shift and I began to pay less attention to what I wanted to say and more to what students had to say. I began to listen more and more carefully to students' stories of practice, as they articulated their struggles with ethical situations, as they struggled to figure out why they reacted to certain children in certain ways and as they confronted the childhood experiences that coloured those reactions.

Restorying their lives became a powerful way to embody the child development theory underlying informed practice.

After reading Hamilton and Pinnegar (1998) I began to appreciate the wider sense of my desire to be the best teacher possible, to not only "empower others toward that goal, but to reconceptualize the ways in which academics generally and teacher educators specifically view teaching practice" (p. 235).

Reflective Turn Eight: Understanding How Students Shape Me

I also think students began to see me as a more understanding teacher. Just as children feel safer confiding in adults who do not criticize, I think the students in my classes felt safer sharing their stories when they realized I would just listen and trust them to figure out their own professional dilemmas. All this shifting, and the reflection it provoked, helped me appreciate the interactive nature of teaching. I always hoped that my teaching would somehow inform my students and shape their learning. It was only as I began to carefully listen to how they responded to my teaching that I became aware of how much who I am as a teacher is shaped by my students' responses to me. The more flexible, the more curious I was about this process, the more I sensed the shaping and the more this interactive process became the most exciting part of my teaching. My willingness to listen and be "shaped" by my students seemed to be an effective model for encouraging future teachers to allow themselves to be shaped by the children they encounter and by the work they do.

Reflective Turn Nine: How Our Family Stories Shape Our Teaching Stories

This reflective turn came ever so slowly for me. For years I had overlooked the obvious by not appreciating how significantly a person's interactions with her own children affect her teaching of other people's children. How interactions as children in our birth families play out in our interactions with our own children seems to set the stage for our interactions with the children in our care and in our classrooms. The more we understand the roots of our reactions, the more we can decide which ways of responding we want to keep and which we want to change. As we shared stories about these roots,

I came to appreciate with Clandinin and Connelly (1991) how "deliberately storying and restorying one's life...is a fundamental method of personal (and social) growth" (p. 259).

I discovered that videocases, with all their non-verbal nuances, seemed to oil memory in a way that encourages childhood stories to emerge for the examination that can improve perspective. It seems to me that personal stories - of childhood - of practice - somehow emotionally encode the principles that guide our actions. Examining and sharing these seems to make us more awake to our embodied knowing. I would like to continue to prepare teachers and caregivers in a way that creates this life-long pattern of systematic reflection in action, for them and for myself.

Multiple Meanings

I hope that readers will be able to see the many possible meanings there are in this study - this story of my experiences over the past four years - and through this narrative process perhaps see what Clandinin and Connelly (1991) describe as "other possibilities for telling their own stories" (p. 278).

Hamilton and Pinnegar (1998) refer to self-study as "living educational theory." It is such a wonderful phrase to describe what I am doing, what teachers need to do in order to model what we wish the next generation of teachers to do. "It is living because, as people engage in understanding it, they learn more and their theory changes as they understand more. Further, because they are living what they learn, new knowledge emerges" (p. 242-43).

I sometimes feel that this study has been a journey into the obvious. Of course, I have always known that modeling is an important way to learn, that articulation helps thinking, that the skills of teaching and parenting are similar, that personal stories enliven learning, that childhood experiences influence our lives, that listening to others is a crucial part of communication and so on. I wonder how I could have always *known* all this but not in a way that profoundly infused my teaching until I undertook this study. I wonder, along with Schon (1991, p. 358), about the "processes through which underlying stories and perspectives are sometimes transformed." It has become important for me to understand this about myself so that I can help my students move from knowing to being and to understand how narrative inquiry "opens participants to understanding change in their practice" (Clandinin and Connelly, 1991, p. 275).

Writing a professional journal, circumscribed by coursework and thesis writing and guided by conversations with a skilled supervisor, seemed to focus on what I knew, but did not fully understand. As under a lens, these focused thoughts generated enough heat to shift my perspective and my actions. I no longer just *know* these important principles; they have become who I am, as a whole person, in the classroom. To paraphrase Erickson and MacKinnon (1991), it required many "reflective conversations" before I became "adept at 'seeing' and acting on the basis of those perceptions" (p. 18).

I know I grow as a parent as my children continually shape me and I suspect I am a better teacher as I continue to allow my students to shape me as I shape them. This seems to be the core of a larger process described by Clandinin and Connelly (1991) where

the individual is shaped by the larger professional knowledge context, as well as the ways in which the professional knowledge context has been reshaped in the unique situation in which the individual lives and works ...the individual is shaped by the situation and shapes the situation in the living out of the story and in the storying of the experience (p. 275).

This study has helped me reshape all those hours of sitting in classrooms as a student. I no longer teach the way I was taught. I feel the old story of being the "expert" in the classroom being restoried in my teaching. I have come to appreciate that

teacher education is a moral endeavor. The evidence of our understanding about teaching should appear not just in our own practice but, also in the practice of our students and, therefore, in the lives and actions of their students. (Hamilton and Pinnegar, 1998, p. 242)

I feel a new perspective in my bones - that of the students and I as learners together, exploring with curiosity what we know and want to learn about children. My study of my teaching is on-going. I like how Olson (1993) expresses it when she says:

For me, the roles of teacher/learner/researcher are integral. As I inquire into my practice as a teacher, I am a learner and a researcher as well. As I pay attention to figuring out what I am doing in order to help students figure out what they are doing, I learn more about myself, my students, and the process of reconstructing knowledge. (p. 255)

I will need to remain thoughtful and open and curious - to continue to discover what I 'already "know." I need to continue to think about the "linguistic turn" described by

Sfard (1998) where *knowledge* is replaced in the discussion on learning by *knowing*, where the "permanence of *having* gives way to the constant flux of *doing*, of being part of a community of learners puzzling out our practices with children. I think I am just beginning to understand what this shift is all about.

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APPENDIX 1

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY

This study is focused primarily on myself and how I think about my teaching. However, students share the classroom with me and often the courses I teach are required in their programs. Any participation was freely and voluntarily given without coercion, either explicit or implicit. I gave a thorough explanation of my study at the beginning of each term and often referred to the progress of my study as it unfolded, occasionally sharing sections of my journal with them.

Since videotaping is a very helpful tool in self-study teacher research, and since I wanted to model the importance of the videotaping for students in their own work with children, I occasionally videotaped myself teaching my classes. We discussed these occasions ahead of time to ensure that all participants felt comfortable with this. The camera was focused solely on myself. Since seating in my classes is self-selected, sitting well outside the camera range was an option for everyone.

Sometimes students volunteered to hold the camera and sometimes it was placed on a tripod. In both cases, students were in charge of the on and off button with the instructions to turn the camera off at any time they wanted to or if it were requested by anyone. Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time without risk or penalty. Since it is difficult for students to withdraw if they are registered in a required course, we agreed that the camcorder would be shut off at any time a student wished to speak and not be recorded. Whether or not students participated did not affect their grades.

Students were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. The videotapes and my journal entries were for my use only. All student journals and assignments were returned to them. Real names have not been used in my thesis and any student writing was used only with the writer's consent. To ensure anonymity, any references to students have been disguised in any details that would reveal identity and are often composites of students that disguise particulars.

I have reviewed the University Standards for the Protection of Human Research Participants and have consulted with the Ethics Committee at my community college, the site of my research on my own teaching. My study was conducted in accordance with their guidelines.